

## **Suggested Web Site Best Practices**

CAO - Web Solutions Branch

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## Suggested WSB Web Site Best Practices

(Each of these suggestions was originally raised at a CAO-Web Solutions Branch (WSB) Peer Review, WSB Skills Seminar, or another WSB-wide forum; and appeared to represent a consensus of those in attendance. Material in footnotes may not have been raised at those forums.)

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### **Abbreviations and Acronyms** *see also Forms #5)*

Abbreviations should be coded with <abbr> tags (each having a “title” attribute identifying what the abbreviation means). Acronyms<sup>1</sup> should be coded with <acronym> tags (with “title” attributes).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acronyms are words formed from the initial letter(s) of the phrase they originally represented – for instance NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), COPPA (Children’s Online Privacy

**“About” page** *see also Biographies #(3)*

Each committee, caucus, or support office Web site should have an “about” page that describes the purpose of the office (and perhaps the philosophy of the office), the history of the office, who is in charge of the office, and provides contact information.<sup>3</sup>

**Academy Nominations** *see Service Academy Nominations***Accessibility Policy**

Each Web site should include a page indicating what accessibility standard(s) the site attempts to comply with and a way that persons with disabilities can contact the office if they have problems accessing the site. (See, e.g., [Rep. Jason Altmire’s Accessibility Policy](#).)

**Accesskey attribute** *see Navigation #(8)***Acronyms** *see Abbreviations and Acronyms***Alignment** *see also Centering*


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Protection Act), and radar (**radio detecting and ranging**). Acronyms are normally pronounced as they are spelled, while abbreviations normally are pronounced as the word that they are abbreviating (e.g., “Dr.” is normally pronounced “Doctor” (or “Drive”, depending on the context) and not “dir”).

<sup>2</sup> [Checkpoint 4.2 \[priority 3\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites need to “[s]pecify the expansion of each abbreviation or acronym in a document where it first occurs.”

For more information on the <abbr> and <acronym> tags, see “[Accessible Web Pages: Abbreviations and Acronyms](#),” *e-CyberCongress Connection*, summer 2005. A more rigorous approach based on current standards as well as the draft W3C [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0](#) and the draft W3C [XHTML 2.0 Specifications](#), is set out in Colin Lieberman’s “[The Accessibility Hat Trick: Getting Abbreviations Right](#),” *A List Apart* (January 16, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Jakob Nielsen, in “[Guidelines for Visualizing Links](#)” (October 27, 2003), notes:

Representing a[n] . . . organization on the Internet is one of a website's most important jobs. Explaining the . . . [organization's] purpose and what it stands for provides essential support for any of the site's other goals. Unfortunately, most websites do a poor job on this explanation.

It is fairly common for sites to have an *About Us* section, and in fact I recommend having a **homepage link** that's explicitly called either *About <name-of-company>* or *About Us*. This link need not be the most prominent on the homepage, but it should be present and easily visible. In our study [of Web sites of government agencies, non-profits, and various size for-profits,] users had trouble locating . . . [organization] information when the link had a nonstandard name, like *Info Center*, or when it was placed near graphical elements that looked like advertisements and thus were ignored.

Nielsen recommends that the *About* page also include:

- The organization's top executive or official
- Correct contact information
- The organization's philosophy
- Historical timeline and milestones

Finally, Nielsen points out that:

Saying who you are and what you do is basic politeness in any conversation. In business, it's also good to establish credibility and respect by explaining your company's origins, how you view your business, and how you relate to the community.

Style sheets, not the “align” attribute, should be used to set alignments.<sup>4</sup> Which style sheet property is appropriate to use for alignment depends on what is being aligned:

- Alignment of text should be done with the style sheets “text-align” property.
- Alignment of <hr>, <iframe>, <img>, <input>, <object> and similar tags should be done with the style sheets “margin-left” and “margin-right” properties.<sup>5</sup>
- Alignment of table captions (i.e., the <caption> tag) should ideally be done with the style sheets “caption-side” property. Internet Explorer 6, however, does not support the “caption-side” property.<sup>6</sup> It is, nonetheless, recommended that the “caption-side” style sheets property be used (instead of the “align” attribute of the <caption> tag), with the understanding that the feature will not work until browsers become more standards compliant.
- Alignment of <legend> content with respect to the <fieldset> tag does not appear to be supported by style sheets. Until the <legend> tag will accept style sheet “align” properties, it is reasonable to continue using the “align” attribute (note, however, that the only valid values for the “align” attribute of the <legend> tag are “left”, “right”, “top”, and “bottom” – “center” is not a valid value for the “align” attribute of the <legend> tag).<sup>7</sup>

### <applet> tags

<sup>4</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” (Sections [11.2.1](#), [11.2.2](#), [13.7.4](#), [15.1.2](#), [15.3](#), and [17.10](#) of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designate the “align” attribute of the following tags as deprecated attributes: <caption>, <div>, <h1> to <h6>, <hr>, <iframe>, <img>, <legend>, <object>, <p>, and <table>).

<sup>5</sup> To align left, use: margin-left: 0; margin-right: auto

To align right, use: margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0

Note: In Internet Explorer 6 and 7, the “auto” value of the “margin” property is only supported when the browser is in Standards Mode (Internet Explorer’s Standards Mode is the equivalent of Mozilla’s Almost Standards Mode). To ensure that IE7 is in Standards Mode, use one of the XHTML 1.0 <!DOCTYPE> declarations from the W3C [Recommended List of DTDs](#). To ensure that IE6 is in Standards Mode, use one of the XHTML 1.0 <!DOCTYPE> declarations from the W3C [Recommended List of DTDs](#) and make sure that the <!DOCTYPE> declaration is the first thing in the file. For additional <!DOCTYPE> declarations that are compatible with Internet Explorer being in Standards Mode, see Henri Sivonen’s [Activating the Right Layout Mode Using the Doctype Declaration](#).

<sup>6</sup> A CAO-WSB analysis of www.house.gov usage for April 12 to 16, 2007, indicates that the following browsers each accounted for at least 0.1% of the identifiable, non-robot access to the site:

- |                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| 1. Internet Explorer 6.x | 50.90% |
| 2. Internet Explorer 7.x | 25.34% |
| 3. Internet Explorer 5.x | 6.85%  |
| 4. Firefox 2.x           | 6.78%  |
| 5. Firefox 1.x           | 4.85%  |
| 6. Safari                | 2.83%  |
| 7. Firefox 3 (Minefield) | 0.45%  |
| 8. Netscape 7.x          | 0.33%  |
| 9. Opera                 | 0.19%  |
| 10. Netscape 8.x         | 0.17%  |

<sup>7</sup> See [§ 17.10 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#).



The <object> tag, not the <applet> tag, should be used to insert programs into HTML pages. The <applet> tag should not be used for any purpose.<sup>8</sup>

### Apostrophes and Quotation Marks

Open and close, single and double quotation marks (and apostrophes) generated by Microsoft products, often generate proprietary coding that is not compliant with the Unicode standard.

- (1) When it is desired – in the content of a Web site – to use the curved open and close single and double quotation marks (or a curved apostrophe), use the decimal representations:<sup>9</sup>

'	open single quote	&#8216;
'	close single quote (or apostrophe)	&#8217;
“	open double quote	&#8220;
”	close double quote	&#8221;

- (2) When using a single or double quotation mark in the coding of a Web site (e.g., in <a href="index.shtml">), use neutral (i.e., uncurved) single or double quotation marks:

'	single quote
"	double quote

**Arabic language material** *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

### Archived House Web sites

The National Archives and Records Administration's official copy of the House and Senate Web sites of the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress is available at <http://webharvest.gov/collections/>. Additional copies of former House office Web pages are available (going back to 1996) through the Internet Archive at <http://www.archive.org/index.php>. Copies of Web sites of former Members of the House that were recognized by the Congressional Management Foundation with their 2006 Gold, Silver or Bronze Mouse Awards, are available at <http://www.connectingtocongress.org/>.

**<area> tags** *see Image Maps #(3)*

**Armenian language material** *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

### Artistic Discovery Contest

Member offices should be encouraged to provide information about how to apply to compete in their competition in the Artistic Discover Contest. Offices may also want to include information about previous winners of the contest from their district.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> [Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 13.4 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the <applet> tag as a deprecated element).

<sup>9</sup> For additional information, see David Wheeler's "[Curling Quotes in HTML, SGML, and XML](#)."

**Audio files** *see Multimedia files and Audio files*

### Aural Style Sheets

If using aural style sheets, keep in mind that Jaws (starting with version 8) uses screen style sheets – not aural style sheets – to determine the text to be presented.

**Babel Fish** *see also Language of Text; Linking # (11); and Privacy Policy and Cookies*

Offices desiring to include the Alta Vista's free [Babel Fish](#) language translation function on the office's Web site should be cautioned that:

- Babel Fish generates third party cookies on the PCs of people who use their service. Use of cookies on Congressional Web sites has generated bad publicity in the past.<sup>11</sup> If an office does decide to use Babel Fish, the office should be strongly encouraged to (a) provide notice on their Privacy Policy page that use of this feature may generate third-party cookies on their PC; and (b) include (in the office's Privacy Policy) a link to [Alta Vista's Privacy Policy](#) (with an appropriate exit message)<sup>12</sup>.
- The [Babel Fish software](#) imports a JavaScript on the office's Web site and jumps the user to a non-House of Representatives Web site (<http://babelfish.altavista.com/>) without informing the user that they are leaving the House Web site and that neither the office nor the House is responsible for the content of that site. This would appear to violate the provision in the *Members' Congressional Handbook* concerning Web sites<sup>13</sup> that states that "HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are

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<sup>10</sup> Examples of Web sites that include material on the Artistic Discovery Contest include [Rep. Neil Abercrombie](#), [Rep. Robert Aderholt](#), [Rep. Eric Cantor](#), [Rep. Steve Chabot](#), [Rep. Tom Cole](#), [Rep. Jim Cooper](#), [Rep. Bill Delahunt](#), [Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen](#), [Rep. Mike Honda](#), [Rep. Dennis Moore](#), [Rep. Devin Nunes](#), [Rep. Paul Ryan](#), and [Rep. David Scott](#). Generic text is also available at [http://www.house.gov/house/subpage\\_content/ArtisticDiscovery\\_content.htm](http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/ArtisticDiscovery_content.htm).

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., "[Dozens of U.S. Senators are Quietly Tracking Visits to their Web Sites even Though they have Publicly Pledged Not to Do So](#)" by Declan McCullagh and Anne Broache, CNET News.com, January 6, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> The [Members' Congressional Handbook \(Web Sites\)](#), § 5), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at

[http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht\\_exit\\_msg.htm](http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht_exit_msg.htm)

<sup>13</sup> [Members' Congressional Handbook \(Web Sites\)](#), § 5).

required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.” (Similar language is contained in the *Committees’ Congressional Handbook*.)<sup>14</sup>

- Babel Fish may not accurately translate some of the nuances of a Web site’s text. As the sponsor’s of Babel Fish point out, “Expect Babel Fish to allow you to grasp the general intent of the original, not to produce a polished translation.”<sup>15</sup>

**Backgrounds** *see also Centering; and Navigation #(1)*

- (1) Background colors should be designated with style sheets (using the “background-color” property). The “bgcolor” attribute should not be used for this purpose.<sup>16</sup>
- (2) Background images should be designated with style sheets,<sup>17</sup> not with the “background” attribute.<sup>18</sup>
- (3) Different browsers have different default background colors. Background colors, therefore, should be specified by style sheet, rather than relying on browser defaults.
- (4) The contrast between any text and its background should at least meet the minimum level set out in a respected accessibility standard, e.g., [Guideline 1.4.3](#) of the World Wide Web Consortium’s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (May 17, 2007 working draft).<sup>19, 20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The [Committees’ Congressional Handbook \(Web Site Regulations, General](#), § 5), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives, prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither the committee nor the House is responsible for the content of linked sites. Committees maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at

[http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht\\_exit\\_msg.htm](http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht_exit_msg.htm)

<sup>15</sup> See [http://www.altavista.com/help/babelfish/babel\\_help](http://www.altavista.com/help/babelfish/babel_help).

<sup>16</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 15.1.1 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “bgcolor” attribute as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>17</sup> Use the “background-image” style sheets property.

<sup>18</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 7.5.1 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “background” attribute as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>19</sup> [Guideline 1.4.3 \[level AA\] of the World Wide Web Consortium’s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 \(May 17, 2007 working draft\)](#) provides that “Text (and images of text) [should] have a [contrast ratio](#) of at least 5:1, except if the text is [pure decoration](#). [Larger-scale](#) text or images of text can have a contrast ratio of 3:1.”

Colour Contrast Analyser 1.1, available at <http://www.wat-c.org/tools/CCA/1.1/index.html>, is able to test for color contrast ratios.

<sup>20</sup> [Checkpoint 2.2 \[priority 2 for images, priority 3 for text\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[e]nsure that foreground and background color combinations provide sufficient contrast when viewed by someone having color deficits or when viewed on a black and white screen.”

**Banners** *see also Navigation #(1); Printing; and Searching*

- (1) Avoid unnecessary blank space under the banner.
- (2) Each page should have a banner with the name of the office.<sup>21</sup> The banner of a Member's Web site should also include the Member's state and district.
- (3) On Member Web sites, having multiple pictures of different aspects of the district in the banner helps convey the diversity of the district and shows that the Member takes pride in all of it. To expand the ability to cover a wide number of images, consider having a slide show<sup>22</sup> in the banner (see e.g., [Rep. Dan Lungren's Web site](#)).<sup>23</sup> **Note:** When a script, applet, object, or similar technique is used to generate such a slide show, the coding needs to be done in such a way that browsers that do not support the technique (or have been set by the user not to support the technique) will display either (a) links to the images from the slide show, or (b) a composite of the images from the slide show, or (c) one image from the slide show.<sup>24</sup>
- (4) When a Member Web site's banner includes scenes or symbols related to the Member's district and/or state, as well as scenes or symbols related to Congress or the Federal Government, consider placing the district/state material closer to the Member's picture than the Federal material. See, e.g., the banner on [Rep. Abercrombie's site](#).

<sup>21</sup> *Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 27) recommends that the name (or logo) of the office sponsoring a Web site appear in the upper left corner of each Web page. The recommendation is designed to accommodate users who initially arrive at an interior page of a Web site (e.g., through a search engine). The recommendation notes:

Don't assume that users have followed a drill-down path to arrive at the current page. They may have taken a different path than what you intended and not have seen information that was contained on higher-level pages.

<sup>22</sup> As with any moving image on a Web site, the regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(j)) provide that accessible Web pages "shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz." [Checkpoint 7.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should:

Until user agents allow users to control flickering, avoid causing the screen to flicker. . . .

**Note.** People with photosensitive epilepsy can have seizures triggered by flickering or flashing in the 4 to 59 flashes per second (Hertz) range with a peak sensitivity at 20 flashes per second as well as quick changes from dark to light (like strobe lights).

The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill](#) (p. 64) also notes that:

Movement on a Web page can be very distracting, and it can greatly increase the amount of time it takes to download a site. If you do include features such as scrolling text or moving graphics, test your site with people unfamiliar with the Hill and see how they react to them.

<sup>23</sup> Notes on how to implement this feature using iframes can be found in the "[IFRAME fading photo's](#)" section of the WSB Blog.

<sup>24</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(l)) provide that When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.

Similarly, [Checkpoint 6.3 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should:

Ensure that pages are usable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or not supported. If this is not possible, provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page.

- (5) The height of the banner should be as small as possible, while still conveying the information desired by the office.<sup>25</sup>
- (6) When practical, graphics used in the banner should be implemented as background images.<sup>26</sup> Deployment of images as background images (rather than using <img> tags) promotes scalability of web pages.<sup>27</sup>
- (7) On Member Web sites, consider including a map of the Member's state with the location of the Member's congressional district highlighted.

### <base> tags

Each file should contain no more than one <base> tag. The <base> tag should be between the <head> tag and the </head> tag. A <base> tag should not be used between the <body> and </body> tags.<sup>28</sup>

<basefont> tags *see* *Fonts* #(3)

**Biographies** *see also* *Committee Assignments and Caucus memberships; Legislative Material; Navigation* #(4); *and* *Word Choice*

- (1) Each Member Web site should have a biography of the Member.<sup>29</sup>
- (2) When a Member's biography mentions an issue, it is recommended that the mention be hypertext linked to the place in the Web site that sets out the Member's position or accomplishments on the issue.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, if the Member's

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., [http://www1.house.gov:801/oh14\\_latourette/](http://www1.house.gov:801/oh14_latourette/).

The Congressional Management Foundation's 1999 report *Building Web Sites Constituents Will Use* (page 17) notes that:

It's extremely important that you identify every page of your site as yours. However, using a banner that takes up 1/3 or more of the screen serves no purpose and makes it difficult and frustrating from users to read the information there're after because they have to keep scrolling past the irrelevant banner in order to get it.

The Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 54) report goes on to say:

... using a banner or graphics that take up most of the screen serves no purpose. It also makes it difficult and frustrating for users to read the information they're after because they have to keep scrolling to get the information they are seeking. At least two thirds of every page on your site should contain useful information.

<sup>26</sup> See "Backgrounds", above.

<sup>27</sup> An alternative technology that can be used, if appropriate, is Scalable Vector Graphics. For information on SVG, see the W3C Web site at <http://www.w3.org/Graphics/SVG/>.

<sup>28</sup> *Section 12.4 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "When present, the **BASE** element must appear in the **HEAD** section of an HTML document, before any element that refers to an external source. The path information specified by the **BASE** element only affects URIs in the document where the element appears."

Notwithstanding the W3C specification, some versions of Internet Explorer (prior to version 7.0) supported multiple <base> tags between the <body> and </body> tags. This support stopped with IE 7.0.

<sup>29</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (p. 58) notes that:

While it shouldn't be the primary focus of the site, every congressional Web site should include a section that contains information about the Member's (or Leader's or committee's) priorities, interests, accomplishments, experience, and expertise.

<sup>30</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's January 2002 report *Congress Online: Assessing and Improving Capitol Hill Web Sites* (p. 16), recommends that "Every congressional Web site should include a



biography mentions a committee, caucus, or other organization that the Member has an affiliation with, it is suggested that the mention be hypertext linked to that organization's Web site; and if the biography mentions an event (e.g., receipt of an award) where there is a relevant press release on the Member's Web site, it is suggested that the mention be hypertext linked to the press release.<sup>31</sup>

- (3) Rather than having "Biography" (or "My Background") as a major navigation heading, consider making the Member's biography part of a section titled "About [Member's name]". This facilitates including additional material about the Member, e.g., the Member's committee assignments and caucus memberships, a description of a typical day (or week) of the Member<sup>32</sup>, and the Member's upcoming schedule.<sup>33, 34</sup>

## Blogs

Offices interested in having blogs on their Web site<sup>35</sup> should be encouraged to use the House Web Log Utility.<sup>36</sup> Offices using the House Web Log Utility include [Rep. Dan](#)

biography and photo of the Member or Chairman as background information. Promotional materials are also appropriate in the Member information section of a congressional Web site, because it is what visitors are looking for when they click to it. Audiences are seeking to learn about the Member's priorities, interests, accomplishments, experience, and expertise."

<sup>31</sup> Rep. Rush Holt's biography, for example, mentions that he was awarded a patent for a solar energy device – and links to the text of the patent at the U.S. Patent and trademark Office's Web site.

<sup>32</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 48\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites include information on what a "Member, Chair, or Leader does on a given day." The [October 10, 2006 issue of the Congressional Management Foundation's Congress Online newsletter](#) praises Rep. José Serrano's "[The Job of a Congressman](#)" and Rep. Adam Smith's "[A Day in the Life](#)." The CMF's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(p. 30\)](#) praises Rep. Brian Baird's Web site for having "A Day on Capitol Hill" slideshow and notes ([p. 17](#)) that only 5.7% of House Web sites include information "about what a Member does". Other examples of similar material include Rep. Bud Cramer's "[A Typical Week](#)" and former-Rep. Lee Hamilton's "[The Job of a Congressman](#)".

<sup>33</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(pages 60 and 67\)](#) notes that

Congressional Web sites can demonstrate accountability by providing voting records, rationales for key votes, and schedules – and they can do so without overburdening their staffs. Your constituents are not interested in knowing about every meeting that takes place or every vote taken. Stick to the most relevant and current information: meetings with constituents, public Member appearances in the district or state, committee hearings, the House and Senate floor schedule.

Most citizens do not understand, or are not familiar with, the intricacies of the congressional schedule. In our research with constituents, they assumed that their elected officials were golfing or on vacation when Congress is in recess. While there isn't much legislative activity to report during recesses, you can correct this misperception by posting a schedule of town hall meetings, reorganizing your home page content, or providing a preview of what the Member, committee, Leader, or Congress will be doing after the break. Every August we see scores of congressional Web sites that haven't been updated since mid-July. Don't let yours be one of them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 23\)](#) also praises the Web site for Rep. Earl Blumenauer for including the Congressman's weekly schedule.

<sup>34</sup> [Rep. Cynthia McKinney's Web site](#) used WIDA to provide her schedule.

<sup>35</sup> Before deciding whether to have a blog, the Congressional Management Foundation, in its [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 71\)](#) recommends that offices consider the following:

[Burton](#), [Rep. Tom Feeney](#), [Rep. Tom Tancredo](#), the [Republican Policy Committee](#), and the [Republican Study Committee](#).

**<body> tags** *see Layout #(2)*

## Bolding

- (1) Where bolding would be appropriate on a visual display, use `<strong>` tags, not `<b>` tags.<sup>37</sup>

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**Can we dedicate the resources that would be necessary to launch—and sustain—a blog?** The most precious resource in most congressional offices is time—especially the Member’s time. A blog requires constant attention and staff resources—in most cases taking the staffer away from other projects or duties. To be a truly effective blogger requires a time commitment to regularly—even daily—update and post new content to the blog. It will also take staff time to read through and publish reader comments and to respond when necessary. Be sure you are ready to make the commitment; too many Members have launched blogs that fall by the wayside because of insufficient resources.

**Are we willing to allow constituents and other members of the public to post comments to the blog?** A vast majority of the mainstream blogs allow the moderator or other user to start a “thread” to which viewers can comment. Will the office allow comments—the good and the bad, the complimentary and the not so complimentary? Good management policies will need to put in place and enforced by the Member’s staff to make sure the medium is not abused or too one-sided.

**Does the Member have something to say that isn’t being said somewhere else?** While blogs are becoming more and more prevalent every day, not every Member should have a blog. People read blogs because they provide information that they do not get from traditional media sources. If the Member is worried about alienating people and not willing to speak “off script,” the blog is probably not a good idea. Blogs are expected to provide unfiltered and informal communication and personal perspective. In a world of scripted speeches and carefully thought-out talking points, this is a valid concern for Members and staff. Also, it is critical that a blog be more than a different way to list press releases, otherwise blog enthusiasts—your intended audience—will be the first to notice and the last to return.

**If we aren’t ready for our own blog, what about guest blogging, or special event blogging?**

Many Members have been successful players in the world of blogs by chiming in, or guest blogging, on other mainstream blogs. Another alternative is for the Member to publish a blog or trip diary during a significant event, like a CODEL to Iraq, that chronicles the Member’s impressions of what they encounter. These blogs are a good way for Members to enter into the blogosphere without overwhelming staff and running out of interesting and relevant things to say.

<sup>36</sup> The availability of the House Web Log Utility was announced on [December 11, 2006, through a Dear Colleague letter from the Chairman of the House Administration Committee](#).

For more information on the House Web Log Utility, see

<http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/update/blog/index.htm>.

<sup>37</sup> [Section 3.1 of the W3C HTML Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that “The proper HTML elements should be used to mark up emphasis: **EM** and **STRONG**. The **B** and **I** elements should not be used; they are used to create a visual presentation effect. The EM and STRONG elements were designed to indicate structural emphasis that may be rendered in a variety of ways (font style changes, speech inflection changes, etc.) .”

Perhaps the one legitimate exception to this standard (and even then, one to be used with care) is when you are reproducing text that originally existed as non-World Wide Web printed text. As Paul Ford notes in “[Processing Processing](#)” (September 2, 2003) (cited in Jeffrey Zeldman’s, *Designing With Web Standards* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, [2006], p. 175):

When I’m publishing content from 1901 and it’s in italics, it’s in *italics*, not emphasized.  
Typography has a semantics that is subtle, changing, and deeply informed by history.

- (2) Other than in headings, bolding should normally be limited to a few words – entire sentences or paragraphs should normally not be bolded.<sup>38</sup>

### <br> tags

The “clear” property in style sheets should be used instead of the “clear” attribute of the <br> tag.<sup>39</sup>

### Browsealoud

Offices should consider including a Browsealoud link on each page. Browsealoud is a screen reader designed particularly for people with English literacy problems and/or learning disabilities such as dyslexia. The Browsealoud link should point to a page on the office’s Web site that has the content of the House “About The Browsealoud Plug-In” page (<http://www.house.gov/house/browsealoud.shtml>).<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, in *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (p. 275) note that: Highlighting carefully chosen keywords can attract readers’ attention to specific areas of the page. Using design treatments such as boldface or colored text adds emphasis and draws the eye to important elements . . . Highlighting entire sentences or long phrases slows readers down, so single out just those words and phrases that communicate key points. Emphasizing too many items with color highlight or bold text causes diminishing returns; nothing stands out; and the page just looks busy.

<sup>39</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 15.1.3 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “clear” attribute of the <br> tag as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>40</sup> Web sites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server are encouraged to use the server-side include:

```
<!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/browsealoud_content.html" -->
```

All other sites can use code along the lines of:

```
<iframe src="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/browsealoud_content.html"
scrolling="auto" width="660" height="3025" frameborder="0" title="About the Browsealoud
plug-in"><ul><li><a
href="http://www.house.gov/house/browsealoud.shtml">About The Browsealoud Plug-
In</a></li></ul></iframe>
```

**Note:** when using the <include> on a page that can be accessed with a virtual URL, be sure to test the page with the virtual URL.

Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the House’s “About The Browsealoud Plug-In” page. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office’s Web site. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with [Checkpoint 13.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) which provides that an accessible Web site should “Use navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner.”

[Section 4 of the W3C Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) further provides that:

A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.






Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:

1. navigation bars
2. the primary content of a page

...



Possible graphic links to Browsealoud include:

- (1)  <sup>41</sup>
- (2)  <sup>42</sup>
- (3)  <sup>43</sup>
- (4)  <sup>44</sup>
- (5)  <sup>45</sup>

## Browser compatibility

- (1) Designing Web sites to only run well in one type of browser is contrary to industry best practices and will generally produce Web sites that are not accessible to people with disabilities.<sup>46</sup> Sites should be checked<sup>47</sup> against a range

A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill](#) (page 63) recommends that Congressional Web sites should:

**Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn's* Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.house.gov/images/browsaloud.gif>

<sup>42</sup> [http://www.house.gov/include\\_content/images/audio1.gif](http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/audio1.gif)

<sup>43</sup> [http://www.house.gov/include\\_content/images/leftnav\\_readtome.gif](http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/leftnav_readtome.gif)

<sup>44</sup> [http://www.house.gov/include\\_content/images/baloud1.gif](http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/baloud1.gif)

<sup>45</sup> [http://www.house.gov/include\\_content/images/logo\\_browsealoud.gif](http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/logo_browsealoud.gif)

<sup>46</sup> For additional material on this subject, see the [letter from the World Wide Web Consortium to the U.S. Copyright Office concerning "37 CFR Part 202 \[Docket No. RM 2005-9\]" \(August 22, 2005\)](#).

Jeffrey Zeldman, in the second edition [2006] of *Designing With Web Standards* (pp. 33 & 37), notes that:

In a misguided effort to reduce expenses, an increasing number of sites are designed to work only in Internet Explorer, and sometimes only on the Windows platform, thus locking out 15-25% of their potential visitors and customers. . . .

I won't pretend to understand the business model of a company that would say no to up to a quarter of its potential customers. And the sheer number of customers lost by this myopic approach should boggle the mind of any rational business owner or noncorporate agency with a mandate to serve the public.

Say you don't mind losing up to 25% of the people who choose to visit your site. The "IE-only" approach still makes no sense because there's no guarantee that IE (or even desktop browsers as a category) will continue to dominate web space. For one thing, as I write these words, Firefox continues to take market share away from IE. For another, more people are getting their internet fix via mobile devices. In the U.S., desktop browsing still far outweighs mobile use; in Japan the reverse is true. While the numbers are continually changing, the trend favors mobile ([www.gotomobile.com](http://www.gotomobile.com)). As ubiquitous computing gains acceptance and creates new markets, the

of browsers and versions of browsers. To help identify which browsers should be tested against House Web sites, CAO-WSB conducted an analysis of www.house.gov usage for April 12 to 16, 2007, and found that the following browsers each accounted for at least 0.1% of the identifiable, non-robot access to the site:

1. Internet Explorer 6.x 50.90%
2. Internet Explorer 7.x 25.34%
3. Internet Explorer 5.x 6.85% <sup>48</sup>
4. Firefox 2.x 6.78%
5. Firefox 1.x 4.85%
6. Safari 2.83% <sup>49</sup>
7. Firefox 3 (Minefield) 0.45%
8. Netscape 7.x 0.33%
9. Opera 0.19%
10. Netscape 8.x 0.17% <sup>50</sup>

- (2) Browser compatibility does not require that a Web site look absolutely identical from one browser to another. Instead, it expects that a site will be at least presentable (and have at least equivalent functionality) from one browser to the next.

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notion of designing to the quirks of *any* individual desktop browser seems more and more 20<sup>th</sup> century and less and less intelligent.

Zeldman also notes in [“99% of Websites Are Obsolete”](#) (September 4, 2002):

Some years[ago] . . . , Netscape's Navigator browser enjoyed a market share greater than Microsoft's Internet Explorer does today. At the time, conventional wisdom held that Netscape's was the only browser that mattered, and developers coded accordingly. Untold millions of dollars later, the market changed. Netscape-only sites were dumped in the landfill beside the Information Superhighway.

<sup>47</sup> [Appendix A \(items 4 to 7\) of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) recommends that Web sites be validated as accessible by use of various tools, including:

4. Use a text-only browser or emulator.
5. Use multiple graphic browsers, with:
  - o sounds and graphics loaded,
  - o graphics not loaded,
  - o sounds not loaded,
  - o no mouse,
  - o frames, scripts, style sheets, and applets not loaded
6. Use several browsers, old and new.
7. Use a self-voicing browser, a screen reader, magnification software, a small display, etc.

<sup>48</sup> Though the April 12 to 16, 2007 study did not differentiate between the Windows and Macintosh versions of the software, it is safe to assume that virtually all of the 6.85% represents IE 5.x for Windows. In a similar study conducted by CAO-WSB for January 30 to February 5, 2006 (that did differentiate between operating systems), IE 5.x for Macintosh use constituted less than 0.1% of total www.house.gov usage.

<sup>49</sup> Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger in their *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 94) look at the question of where the cutoff should be in testing browser compatibility:

Is it worth testing your Web site . . . in order to cater to . . . two percent of the market . . . ? We would probably . . . say “yes,” at least for bigger Web sites for which a two percent increase in business is worth more than a few tests and easy fixes. Smaller sites, on the other hand, might decide that the . . . return is insufficient to bother testing on [small-share browsers]. . . . As always, with a limited budget, you must choose your battles.

<sup>50</sup> For a different approach to identifying browsers that should be tested against, see [“Graded Browser Support”](#) by Nate Koechley.

## Business with the Federal Government

Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with people seeking business opportunities with the Federal government)<sup>51</sup> that are hosted on an HIR Web server should be encouraged to include the [CRS-maintained “Business Opportunities with the Federal Government” page](#) in their Web site. Offices not hosted on an HIR Web server should be encouraged to iframe the page.<sup>52</sup>

**Cambodian language material** *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

**Campaign material** *see Election Campaign Material*

**<caption> tags** *see Alignment*

## Casework

<sup>51</sup> The [Congressional Management Foundation’s Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(p. 46\)](#) notes that “Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs* Web site provides information on veterans’ benefits for its key audience.”

<sup>52</sup> Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the generic “Doing Business with the Federal Government” page. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office’s Web site. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with [Checkpoint 13.4 \[ priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) which provides that an accessible Web site should “[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner.”

[Section 4 of the W3C Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) further provides that:

A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.

Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:

1. navigation bars
2. the primary content of a page

...

A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can’t form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation’s [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 63\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites should:

**Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don’t force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn*’s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

Avoid using the term “casework” – it is jargon and may confuse or alienate constituents. Consider, instead using something along the lines of “How I Can Help You with Government Agencies”.<sup>53</sup>

**Caucuses** see “About” page; and *Committee Assignments and Caucus memberships*

## Centering

Style sheets, not <center> tags, should be used to achieve centering.<sup>54</sup> Which style sheet property is appropriate to use for centering depends on what is being centered,

- centered text should use the style sheets property “text-align:center”
- background images being centered should use the style sheets property “background-position”
- all other items being centered (e.g., the <hr>, <iframe>, <img>, <input>, and <object> tags) should use “margin-left:auto;margin-right:auto”<sup>55</sup>

## Charts and Graphs

All charts and graphs should have a link to a table that contains the same data as the chart or graph.<sup>56</sup> Such tables should conform to the standards for accessible tables.

<sup>53</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation’s [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 61\)](#) notes that “Congressional jargon and the legislative process can be difficult for most people off the Hill to understand. Focus on making the information on your site understandable, rather than impressive and official-sounding.”

[Rep. Ben Chadler’s Web site](#) uses “Assistance with Federal Agencies”. [Rep. Spencer Bachus’ Web site](#) uses “Help with Federal Agencies”.

<sup>54</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” (Section 15.1.2 of the [W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the <center> tag as a deprecated element).

<sup>55</sup> In Internet Explorer 6 and 7, the “auto” value of the “margin” property is only supported when the browser is in Standards Mode (Internet Explorer’s Standards Mode is the equivalent of Mozilla’s Almost Standards Mode). To ensure that IE7 is in Standards Mode, use one of the XHTML 1.0 <!DOCTYPE> declarations from the W3C [Recommended List of DTDs](#). To ensure that IE6 is in Standards Mode, use one of the XHTML 1.0 <!DOCTYPE> declarations from the W3C [Recommended List of DTDs](#) and make sure that the <!DOCTYPE> declaration is the first thing in the file. For additional <!DOCTYPE> declarations that are compatible with Internet Explorer being in Standards Mode, see Henri Sivonen’s [Activating the Right Layout Mode Using the Doctype Declaration](#).

<sup>56</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(a\)](#)) provide that “A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via “alt”, “longdesc”, or in element content).”

[Checkpoint 1.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should:

Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element (e.g., via “alt”, “longdesc”, or in element content). *This includes:* images, graphical representations of text (including symbols), image map regions, animations (e.g., animated GIFs), applets and programmatic objects, ascii art, frames, scripts, images used as list bullets, spacers, graphical buttons, sounds (played with or without user interaction), stand-alone audio files, audio tracks of video, and video. . . .

For example, in HTML:

- Use “alt” for the IMG, INPUT, and APPLET elements, or provide a text equivalent in the content of the OBJECT and APPLET elements.

**Children** *see Missing and Exploited Children*

**Chinese language material** *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

**Classes** *see Style Sheets #(5)*

**Colors** *see also Backgrounds; and Tools for Validating Web Sites #(3)*

- (1) When color is used to supply information (e.g., listing in red the school districts where most of the enrolled students receive subsidized meals), the information also needs to be made available to people who are color blind and to people who are using monochrome monitors – in order to comply with § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.<sup>57</sup>
- (2) Consider using “browser safe” colors.<sup>58</sup>
- (3) Text colors should be designated with style sheets (using the “color” property). The “text” attribute should not be used for this purpose.<sup>59</sup>

## Comments

Comments should be preceded with a less-than-sign, an exclamation mark, two dashes, and a space (<!-- ). At the end of each comment should be a space, two dashes and a greater-than-sign ( -->). In between those two delimiters, do not use two or more consecutive dashes. Some browsers (including FireFox 1.5) have problems with comments that do not conform to this standard.<sup>60</sup>

- 
- For complex content (e.g., a chart) where the "alt" text does not provide a complete text equivalent, provide an additional description using, for example, "longdesc" with IMG or FRAME, a link inside an OBJECT element, or a [description link](#).
  - For image maps, either use the "alt" attribute with AREA, or use the MAP element with A elements (and other text) as content.

<sup>57</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(c\)](#)) provide that “Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.” An identical standard is set out in [Checkpoint 2.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#).

<sup>58</sup> Lynda Weinman in [The Browser-Safe Web Palette](#), however, states that “A lot of people credit me with the browser-safe palette, but it's a misplaced honor (if you can call it that!). I do have the distinction of being the first author to identify and publish the colors - but I can't take credit for creating them. . . . Though this might seem blasphemous to older readers of my books, or loyal website visitors, I believe it's safe to design without the palette. I believe this because so few computer users view the web in 256 colors anymore.”

<sup>59</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 7.5.1 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “text” attribute as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>60</sup> [Section 3.2.4 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) provides that:

HTML comments have the following syntax:

```
<!-- this is a comment -->
<!-- and so is this one,
```



**Commercial references** *see also District Information #(2)*

Other than possibly in comments in the source code, House Web sites should not contain any reference to the commercial firm or developer who designed, coded, or maintains the Web site.<sup>61</sup>

**Committee assignments and Caucus memberships**

Member offices should be encouraged to list the committees, subcommittees, and caucuses<sup>62</sup> that the Member serves on; provide links to those committees, subcommittees<sup>63</sup> and caucuses;<sup>64</sup> and explain the purpose of each committee, subcommittee, and caucus.<sup>65</sup>

**Committee Web sites** *see “About” page*

**Communication** *see Contact Information and Techniques*

**Congressional Art Competition** *see Artistic Discovery Competition*

which occupies more than one line -->

White space is not permitted between the markup declaration open delimiter("<!") and the comment open delimiter ("--"), but is permitted between the comment close delimiter ("--") and the markup declaration close delimiter (">"). A common error is to include a string of hyphens ("---") within a comment. Authors should avoid putting two or more adjacent hyphens inside comments.

<sup>61</sup> The [Members' Congressional Handbook \(Web Sites, Content, § 5\)](#), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

The content of a Member's Web site: . . .

5. May not include any advertisement for any private individual, firm, or corporation, or imply in any manner that the government endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service.

An identical requirement is contained in the [Committee's Congressional Handbook \(Web Site Regulations, Content, § e\)](#).

<sup>62</sup> The [Congressional Caucuses page of Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen](#), lists each caucus that she is a member of, what position she holds within each caucus, and a description of the purpose of each of the caucuses.

[Rep. Earl Blumenauer has a Caucuses page](#) that links off the Issues section of his Web site. Rep. Blumenauer's Caucuses page lists all of the caucuses that he serves on. Each caucus reference links to an individual page on his Web site that lists the officers of that caucus, a link to that caucus' Web site (if any), and/or a description of the purpose and accomplishments of that caucus. The page for each issue area ("[Livable Communities](#)," "[Transportation and Bicycling](#)," etc.) also contains links to the pages that describe the relevant caucuses within Rep. Blumenauer's Web site.

A reasonably comprehensive list of caucus Web sites is set out in Appendix 3: *Caucus Web Sites* of this document.

<sup>63</sup> Most subcommittees have at least one Web page within their full committee's Web site.

<sup>64</sup> The [Congressional Management Foundation's Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age](#), (p. 46) praises [Rep. Mike Honda's Web site](#) for indicating the Congressman's committee assignments. Rep. Honda has links to the committees and subcommittees that he serves on (indicating which subcommittee he serves as ranking member) and also links to the caucuses that he chairs.

<sup>65</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age](#) (page 25) praises Rep. John Larson's Web site because "Rather than just linking to the committees on which he serves, Rep. Larson's site explains the role and responsibilities of each committee".

**Congressional Page Program** *see Page Program*

**Congressional Record** *see Floor Statements*

**Congressional Research Service products** *see Business with the Federal Government; Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance; Issues and Voting Information #(3); Legislative Material #(1); and Student Financial Aid*

### **Constituent Recognitions**

Consider having a page devoted to recognizing constituents (as part of the site's photo album or as part of the site's congressional district section).<sup>66</sup>

**Constituent Services** *see Artistic Discovery Contest; Business with the Federal Government; Consumer Protection Information; Disaster Preparedness Information; District Information; Flags; Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance; Identity Theft Information; Missing and Exploited Children; Greetings; Internships; Navigation #(4); Page Program; Service Academy Nominations; Student Financial Aid; Unclaimed Property; Veterans; and Visiting Washington*

- (1) Where possible, include step-by-step instructions for what a constituent needs to do (and provide) to get assistance.<sup>67</sup>
- (2) Avoid using the term “constituent services” – it is jargon and may confuse or alienate constituents. Consider, instead using something along the lines of “How I Can Help You”.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(pages 21 and 25\)](#) praises the “Highlighting Delawareans” page on Senator Tom Carper's Web site for “posting constituent photo galleries and congratulating constituents on their accomplishments”; and the Web site of Representative Richard Pombo for having “An extensive gallery of constituent photos”. See also the [“Photo Album” on Rep. Marsha Blackburn's Web site](#).

The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 83\)](#) identifies including “photos of constituents on the home page” as an element of a well-formed Congressional Web site.

<sup>67</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(pages 30 to 36\)](#) praises Rep. Brian Baird's Web site for having “an informative FAQ section, which contains casework questions, [and] an example of an actual case”; Rep. John Linder's Web site for providing a “casework section takes his constituents step-by-step through the process of determining eligibility and opening up a case”; and Rep. Xavier Becerra's Web site for providing a: constituent services section [that] guides users through every step in the casework process. The site allows users determine whether the office can help, takes them through FAQs that give them the tools to resolve an issue on their own, and gives clear guidance on what information the office needs in order to open a case.

The report also notes that “Congressman [Mike] Honda's casework section accommodates those who may be unaccustomed to governmental operations”; and praises the Web site of Rep. John Larson for having a “casework assistance [section] that is geared toward informing uninitiated users.”

The Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age, \(p. 57\)](#) praises [Rep. Steve Rothman's Web site](#) for providing a “step-by-step casework guide. . . to help citizens who need assistance from federal agencies.”

<sup>68</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 61\)](#) notes that “Congressional jargon and the legislative process can be difficult for most people off the Hill to understand. Focus on making the information on your site understandable, rather than impressive and official-sounding.”

**Consumer Protection Information** *see also Identity Theft Information*

- (1) Member offices (and offices that have consumers as a constituency) should consider including consumer protection information on their Web site. The Federal Trade Commission's May 2006 *For the Consumer: Congressional Outreach Projects Using FTC Resources*, sites as examples the consumer protection pages of the following Congressional offices: [Rep. Neil Abercrombie](#), [Rep. Spencer Bachus](#), [Rep. Mary Bono](#), [Rep. William Lacy Clay](#), [Rep. Byron Dorgan](#), [Rep. Bob Goodlatte](#), [Rep. Gene Green](#), [Rep. Sue Kelly](#), [Rep. Dennis Moore](#), [Rep. Henry Waxman](#), [Sen. Tim Johnson](#), and [Sen. Jon Kyl](#).
- (2) When linking to consumer protection Web pages from the Federal Trade Commission, consider using the icons available at [http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer/partners\\_buttons.html](http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer/partners_buttons.html).

**Contact Information and Techniques** *see also Blogs; Listserv; Navigation #(4); and Privacy Policy #(1)*

- (1) Consider including, in the "Contact Me" page, a method to allow constituents to communicate electronically with the office<sup>69</sup> (preferably through a form<sup>70</sup> on the "Contact Me" page)<sup>71</sup>.

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[Rep. Ben Chadler's Web site](#) uses "How Can We Help You?". [Rep. Spencer Bachus' Web site](#) uses "Helping You".

<sup>69</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 57\)](#) notes that:

Many offices use their Web sites to direct constituents to contact them offline for the information and services they are seeking. Yet, people who choose the Web as their method of contacting a congressional office are doing so precisely because they prefer to have their needs met online. Respond to their needs accordingly, and you will find you have more satisfied "customers," at less effort and expense to the office than you ever thought possible.

When the Foundation's 2003 report was compiled ([Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age, \(p. 47\)](#)), 97% of House Member, committee, and leadership Web sites provided this capability.

<sup>70</sup> Instructions for using CAO-Web Solutions Branch's form\_proc software to do this are available on HouseNet at:

[http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht\\_formproc.htm](http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht_formproc.htm)

Form\_proc is the software suggested in Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age, \(p. 57\)](#): "House offices can also simplify their e-mail management by utilizing the customized Web-based forms available from House Information Resources (i.e. for tour requests, scheduling requests, casework, feedback, etc.)."

<sup>71</sup> Using a form on the Member's site is preferable to just linking to the House [Write Your Representative page](#), because keeping within the Member's site retains the consistent look and feel. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with [Checkpoint 13.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) which provides that an accessible Web site should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

[Section 4 of the W3C Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) further provides that:

A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.

Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:



- (2) Consider including, in the “Contact Me” page, an electronic newsletter<sup>72</sup> subscription sign-up opportunity (via [Listserv](#)).
- (3) Consider including a staff directory.<sup>73</sup>
- (4) Consider including a form to allow constituents to schedule a meeting with the Member (see e.g., [Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.’s Contact Me page](#)).<sup>74</sup>
- (5) Consider including the regular office hours along with the addresses of Washington and district offices.<sup>75</sup>
- (6) Offices are urged to include a fax number on their Web site.<sup>76</sup>
- (7) Consider including information as to how soon a constituent can expect to get a response and how they will be contacted.<sup>77</sup>

1. navigation bars
2. the primary content of a page

...  
A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 63\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites should:

**Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn's* Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

<sup>72</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(p. 31\)](#) praises Sen. Mary Landrieu's Web site for offering on-line subscriptions to several different newsletters.

<sup>73</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 38\)](#) praises the Web site of Rep. Jeff Miller for providing “a list of staff members and their positions, backgrounds, and phone numbers.” The report ([page 17](#)) indicates that 20.8% of House Member, committee, and leadership office Web sites provide this type of information.

<sup>74</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 29\)](#) praises Sen. Sam Brownback's Web site for offering the ability to request meetings with the Senator online.

<sup>75</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 66\)](#) recommends that:

Every congressional Web site should prominently display basic contact information, including telephone and fax numbers, the office's physical addresses, office hours, and their e-mail address or a link to their contact form. The emerging standard is to have this information on the bottom of every Web page. The more detailed and helpful the contact information, the better. Surprisingly, only 5.0% of Senate Member sites and 11.4% of House Member sites list their office hours.

<sup>76</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 66\)](#) recommends that:

Every congressional Web site should prominently display basic contact information, including telephone and fax numbers, the office's physical addresses, office hours, and their e-mail address or a link to their contact form. The emerging standard is to have this information on the bottom of every Web page. The more detailed and helpful the contact information, the better.

<sup>77</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 50\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites “**Post clear e-mail and correspondence policies.** Clear policies regarding email correspondence reassure citizens that the office

- (8) Offices should be encouraged **not** to include an “e-mail this page to a friend” capability on their Web site because of the security problems that such a feature may create.<sup>78</sup>

**Contrast** *see Backgrounds # (4)*

**Cookies** *see Privacy Policy and Cookies*

**COPPA** *see Kids’ pages; and Privacy Policy and Cookies*

### Copyrighted material

- (1) Copyrighted material<sup>79</sup> should be used only with the written permission of the copyright owner.
- (2) Copyrighted material should not be photo-edited (or otherwise altered) unless the copyright owner has given written permission for the alteration (permission to use copyrighted material does not imply permission to alter the material).
- (3) Where copyrighted material used on a Web site contains a copyright notice (e.g., “©,” “copyright,” or “copr.,” with the name of the copyright owner and the year of original publication), the copyright notice should not be removed from copyrighted material without specific written permission of the copyright owner.
- (4) Material prepared by (or for) a House office is not copyrightable and should not have a copyright notice.<sup>80</sup>

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will process their communications efficiently. [Sen. Jeff Bingaman’s \(D-NM\) e-mail policy](#) tells constituents how their correspondence is handled internally within the office and sets expectations for when they can expect a response from the Senator.”

<sup>78</sup> [Item 22 of The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Checklist](#) (HISPUB 007.1.56, April 2007) provides that “Web forms to email a link to a friend need to be secured so that they can’t be used to relay or spoof email.”

Note, that prior to the issuance of the HISPUB, the Congressional Management Foundation’s [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 39\)](#) praised Rep. Dennis Moore’s Web site for including an “‘inform a friend’ feature [that] allows users to share the site with others via e-mail”

<sup>79</sup> [Title 17, § 102\(a\) of the U.S. Code](#) provides that copyrightable material includes (but is not limited to) the following categories:

- (1) literary works;
- (2) musical works, including any accompanying words;
- (3) dramatic works, including any accompanying music;
- (4) pantomimes and choreographic works;
- (5) pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works;
- (6) motion pictures and other audiovisual works;
- (7) sound recordings; and
- (8) architectural works.

<sup>80</sup> [Title 17, § 105 of the U.S. Code](#) provides that:

Copyright protection under this title is not available for any work of the United States Government, but the United States Government is not precluded from receiving and holding copyrights transferred to it by assignment, bequest, or otherwise.

House Report 94-1476 (the House Judiciary Committee report for the legislation that enacted title 17) goes on to note that:

The general prohibition against copyright in section 105 applies to “any work of the United States Government,” which is defined in section 101 as “a work prepared by an officer or employee of

- (5) Material copied from any Web site – other than a Federal government Web site – should be presumed to be copyrighted. Material from state and local government Web sites; commercial Web sites; newspaper, television, or radio Web sites; educational Web sites; and non-profit Web sites should all be presumed to be copyrighted.

## Courts *see Government Resources*

## Dates and time

- (1) If you dynamically generate the current date or time, use a server-side include, rather than grabbing the information from the user's PC.<sup>81</sup>
- (2) When referring to congresses (e.g., the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress), also provide the years. Do not assume that people off of Capitol Hill know what a particular congress is.<sup>82</sup>
- (3) Information on the Web site should be kept up to date.<sup>83</sup>

<dir> tags *see Lists # (5)*

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the United States Government as part of that person's official duties." Under this definition a Government official or employee would not be prevented from securing copyright in a work written at that person's own volition and outside his or her duties, even though the subject matter involves the Government work or professional field of the official or employee. Although the wording of the definition of "work of the United States Government" differs somewhat from that of the definition of "work made for hire," the concepts are intended to be construed in the same way. . . . [I]t can be assumed that, where a Government agency commissions a work for its own use merely as an alternative to having one of its own employees prepare the work, the right to secure a private copyright would be withheld.

<sup>81</sup> Sample code for doing this can be found at the Indiana University Webmaster's [Server-Side Includes Tutorial](#).

<sup>82</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 61\)](#) notes that "Congressional jargon and the legislative process can be difficult for most people off the Hill to understand. Focus on making the information on your site understandable, rather than impressive and official-sounding."

<sup>83</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 13\)](#) notes that:

The Internet is a fast-paced medium, and users expect up-to-date information. No matter how well designed a site is or how much content it has, it's not going to be useful for visitors if the most current information they can find is six months, or even a year old..

The [January 30, 2006 edition of the Congressional Management Foundation's Congress Online newsletter](#) further notes:

- **Outdated links.** A lot of House sites have outdated or incorrect links. The most frustrating ones were those linking to bills, sponsorships, and co-sponsorships from the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress (and, occasionally, earlier Congresses); dead links to the Clerk's Web site; THOMAS search engines that search the wrong Congress; and those linking to INS (it changed to USCIS in 2003!). Web sites continually change, so it's important to periodically review any link that goes off your site, especially at the beginning of each Congress so you don't have visitors looking at old information.
- **Outdated content.** We also saw an overwhelming amount of outdated content on Member Web sites, such as issue information referring to bills from previous Congresses as though they were current legislation. This is troublesome because few constituents will know that it's the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress (not the 108<sup>th</sup>, 107<sup>th</sup>, or 106<sup>th</sup>) or bother to search THOMAS to double-check. Instead, they will take the information on their Representative's Web site at face value and trust it. Congress is confusing enough to most people without outdated Member sites making it worse!

## Disaster Preparation Information

Member offices should consider including information on their Web sites concerning disaster preparation information. Rep. Mary Bono's Web site, for instance, provides [earthquake preparation information](#).<sup>84</sup>

**District Information** *see also Banner #(7); Constituent Recognitions; Maps; Navigation #(4); and Government Resources #(1)*

- (1) Member offices should be urged to include on their Web site material on the history of their congressional district. See, e.g., [Rep. Diana DeGette's district history page](#), which lists all of the Members of the House who have represented the district since 1861, when Colorado became a territory.
- (2) Many Members of Congress view it as one of their responsibilities to serve as the goodwill ambassador for their district. As such, they may want to feature (and link to) attractions and industries in their district. The [Members' Congressional Handbook](#) and the [Committees' Congressional Handbook](#), however, prohibit House Member and House committee Web sites from including "any advertisement for any private individual, firm, or corporation, or imply in any manner that the government endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service." Two practices have been developed by House offices that wish to provide links to external Web pages that provide information on attractions and industries in their district, while staying within the House rules:
  - (a) Listing **all** of the companies in a Member's district that are within a specific segment of the economy (e.g., all professional sports teams in the district, or all the wine vineyards in a district) and linking to informational pages – not pages primarily containing solicitations for money, volunteerism, or other things of value;<sup>85</sup> and
  - (b) Including a statement on the Web page with the links, that these links are not intended to be an endorsement.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>84</sup> The [October 10, 2006, issue of the Congressional Management Foundation's Congress Online Newsletter](#) praises Rep. Mary Bono's Web site for including information on earthquake preparedness information on [earthquake preparedness](#). Rep. Dan Boren's Web site includes information on [ice storm preparedness](#).

<sup>85</sup> The [March 25, 2003 Dear Colleague](#) from the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Administration Committee, concerning "Supporting Our Troops Web Sites," provides that:  
In publishing web site links consistent with House rules, official sites should direct constituents to informational materials, and not locations containing only solicitations. By doing so, Members can avoid engaging in solicitations which is prohibited under House rules, including solicitations for money, volunteerism, or other things of value.

<sup>86</sup> The ["Wine Links" page of the Congressional Wine Caucus](#) states that  
**\*\*Please note that the links on the following pages will take you outside of The Congressional Wine Caucus' official website. The Congressional Wine Caucus does not control the content of these websites, nor do these links constitute an endorsement by the Congressional Wine Caucus. They are presented here for informational purposes only.\*\***

[Rep. Christopher Shays' "Resources" page](#) provides that:

*These links are being provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by Congressman Christopher Shays of any of the products, services or opinions of the corporation or organization or individual. Congressman Christopher Shays bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality or content of the external site*

- (3) Where there are offices of Federal agencies in (or near the district), Member offices should be encouraged to include information about the offices (or at least links to their Web sites). Consider placing these references in the District Information section of the Web site and/or in the Constituent Services section of the Web site and/or in the Federal Government section of the Web site.<sup>87</sup>
- (4) Member offices should be encouraged to include Census Bureau data about their district.<sup>88</sup>
- (5) On Member Web sites, consider providing links to the Web sites of military units stationed in (or near) the district; and military units associated with the district. See, e.g., Rep. Rush Holt's "[Guard and Reserves](#)" page.

### <!DOCTYPE> declarations

- (1) Each file should have a <!DOCTYPE> declaration. Unless there is an important reason to do otherwise, the <!DOCTYPE> declaration on each file should be<sup>89</sup>:

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*or for that of subsequent links. Contact the external site for answers to questions regarding its content.*

<sup>87</sup> Sources for this information include:

- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/RegionalOffices/>
- Department of Agriculture: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>
- Department of Housing and Urban Development: <http://www.hud.gov/localoffices.cfm>
- Department of Veterans Affairs: <http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1>
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: <http://www.eeoc.gov/offices.html>
- Federal Bureau of Investigation: <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm>
- Internal Revenue Service: <http://www.irs.gov/localcontacts/index.html>
- Minority Business Development Agency:  
[http://www.mbda.gov/?section\\_id=1&parent\\_bucket\\_id=151&content\\_id=2264](http://www.mbda.gov/?section_id=1&parent_bucket_id=151&content_id=2264)
- National Archives and Records Administration:  
<http://www.archives.gov/locations/states.html>
- Natural Resources Conservation Service:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/organization/regions.html#state>
- Small Business Administration: <http://www.sba.gov/localresources/index.html>
- Social Security Administration: <http://www.ssa.gov/regions/>
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services:  
<https://egov.immigration.gov/crisgwi/go?action=offices>
- U.S. Geological Survey – Water Resources Offices: [http://water.usgs.gov/local\\_offices.html](http://water.usgs.gov/local_offices.html)

<sup>88</sup> Web pages devoted to individual congressional districts can be found at the Census Bureau's Fast Facts for Congress site at <http://fastfacts.census.gov/home/cws/main.html>.

<sup>89</sup> [Checkpoint 11.1 \[priority 2\] of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) provides that accessible Web sites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

XHTML 1.0 is the successor to HTML 4.01. Section 3.1.1(4) of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 Specification* provides that:

There must be a DOCTYPE declaration in the document prior to the root element [i.e., prior to the <html> tag]. The public identifier included in the DOCTYPE declaration must reference one of the three DTDs found in [DTDs](#) using the respective Formal Public Identifier. The system identifier may be changed to reflect local system conventions.

```
<!DOCTYPE html
PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-strict.dtd">
```

```
<!DOCTYPE html
```



```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">
```

If that <!DOCTYPE> is not used, then it is recommended that a <!DOCTYPE> from the W3C [Recommended List of DTDs](#) be used. (Note that the <!DOCTYPE> declaration is case sensitive.)

- (2) There should only be one <!DOCTYPE> declaration in a file and it should precede everything in the file.<sup>90</sup>

**Download time** see also *Graphics # (1) and (5); and Tools for Validating Web Sites # (5)*

Offices should be encouraged to have each Web page take no more than 15 seconds to download on a 56.6kb connection.<sup>91</sup>

**Dutch (Flemish) language material** see *Babel Fish; Government Resources # (2); Language of Text; and Linking # (11)*

**Earthquake Preparation Information** see *Disaster Preparation Information*

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```
PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">
```

```
<!DOCTYPE html
PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Frameset//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-frameset.dtd">
```

<sup>90</sup> [Section 3.1.1 of the W3C XHTML 1.0 Specification](#) provides that:

An XML declaration [e.g., <?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>] is not required in all XML documents; however XHTML document authors are strongly encouraged to use XML declarations in all their documents. Such a declaration is required when the character encoding of the document is other than the default UTF-8 or UTF-16 and no encoding was determined by a higher-level protocol.

[Section C.1 of the W3C XHTML 1.0 Specification](#), however cautions that:

some user agents interpret the XML declaration to mean that the document is unrecognized XML rather than HTML, and therefore may not render the document as expected. For compatibility with these types of legacy browsers, you may want to avoid using processing instructions and XML declarations. Remember, however, that when the XML declaration is not included in a document, the document can only use the default character encodings UTF-8 or UTF-16.

An XML declaration, therefore, should not be used on House Web pages as long as Internet Explorer 6 holds a significant market-share of browsers accessing those sites. Preceding the <!DOCTYPE> declaration with an <?xml> declaration (or anything else – even a blank line) in Windows 6 or Opera 7 results in those browsers going into quirks mode, even when there is a valid <!DOCTYPE> declaration. A WSB analysis of www.house.gov usage for April 12 to 16, 2007, indicates that Internet Explorer 6 accounted for 50.90% of the identifiable, non-robot access to the site (Opera usage added another 0.19% for a total of almost 52% of [www.house.gov](#) visitors).

<sup>91</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age](#) (page 55) recommends that:

Your site should load in 15 seconds or less using a standard Internet connection. Bear in mind that, despite the growing availability of broadband connections, the majority of wired households in America still use a 56kbps or slower modem to connect to the Internet.

[J.D. Power and Associates reported on September 20, 2006](#), that 44% of residential ISP customers subscribe to a dial-up service.

**Election Campaign material** *see also Political Language*

- (1) Material originally developed for (or originally paid for by) an election campaign should not be used on House Web sites.<sup>92</sup>
- (2) House Web sites should not contain election campaign information or links to election campaign sites.<sup>93</sup>

**Ellipsis** *see Quotations***<embed> tags**

The <object> tag, not the <embed> tag, should be used to insert programs into HTML pages. The <embed> tag is not compliant with the W3C XHTML 1.0 standard.<sup>94</sup>

**E-Newsletters** *see Listserv and E-Newsletters***Events Schedule** *see also Schedule of Member*

Offices should be encouraged to list upcoming events that they are sponsoring (e.g., town hall meetings).<sup>95, 96</sup>

**Farsi language material** *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

<sup>92</sup> The July 26, 2006 Advisory Memorandum of the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct ([Use of Campaign Funds and Campaign-Founded Resources for Official House Purposes](#)) provides that Congressional office Web sites are not to be paid for with campaign funds. Offices with questions about the extent of that prohibition should be urged to contact the Committee for either informal advice or for a formal written opinion.

<sup>93</sup> The [Members' Congressional Handbook \(Web Sites, Content, §§ 1-2\)](#), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

The content of a Member's Web site:

1. May not include personal, political, or campaign information.
2. May not be directly linked or refer to Web sites created or operated by a campaign or any campaign related entity including political parties and campaign committees.

The [Committee's Congressional Handbook \(Web Site Regulations, Content, §§ a-b\)](#), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

The content of a committee Web site may not:

- a. Include personal, political, or campaign information.
- b. Be directly linked or refer to Web sites created or operated by campaign or any campaign related entity, including political parties and campaign committees.

<sup>94</sup> Use of proprietary tags that are not W3C XHTML compliant also makes a Web page non-compliant with [Checkpoint 11.1 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) which provides that accessible Web sites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

For an attempt at using the <object> tag so that works well across browsers, see Elizabeth Castro's "[Bye Bye Embed](#)," A List Apart (July 11, 2006).

<sup>95</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 23\)](#) praises Rep. John Boozman's Web site for including "Notice of *upcoming events* in Washington, DC, and the district", and the Web site of Rep. Earl Blumenauer for including "*upcoming events*".

<sup>96</sup> WIDA can be used for this in the way that Rep. Cynthia McKinney's Web site used WIDA to provide [highlights of her monthly schedule](#).

**Favicons**

- (1) Each Web page should specify its favicon<sup>97</sup> with a <link rel="SHORTCUT ICON" /> tag, where the "href" attribute specifies the URL of the image to be used as the favicon,<sup>98</sup> e.g.:  

```
<link rel="SHORTCUT ICON" href="http://altmire.house.gov/favicon.ico" />
```
- (2) Favicon file names must end with a .ico extension.<sup>99</sup>
- (3) The "Favicon from Pics" tool at <http://www.chami.com/html-kit/services/favicon/> can convert gif, jpg, png, and bmp files into ico format. Adobe GoLive and CorelDraw also are able to generate ico files.

**File Names** see also Favicons #(2)

When redesigning a Web site, whenever possible reuse the file names of the old site in the new site, so that pre-existing bookmarks and links from other sites will continue to work. If it is not possible to reuse the previous file names, then use redirects to take users who attempt to access the old pages and move them to the corresponding new page (not just to your new homepage).<sup>100</sup>

**Flags** *see also Forms*

- (1) Member offices should be encouraged to include information on how to order U.S. flags flown over the Capitol Building.<sup>101</sup>
- (2) Member offices should be encouraged to use the [E-Flag Calculator](#) as part of their Web pages for ordering U.S. flags flown over the Capitol building. The E-Flag Calculator will calculate the cost of a flag request (including postage) and produce an invoice that the constituent can mail to your office with their check. Additionally, the cost of the flags are automatically updated by the House Office Supply Service and postage rates are automatically updated by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) Consider including a link (from the flag order page) to a page with instructions for the proper care of a flag. See, e.g., Rep. Steven LaTourette's "[Care and Presentation of the Flag](#)" page.

<sup>97</sup> The favicon is the image that will appear on some Web browsers in the URL status box (next to the URL) and in some browsers with the favorites (or bookmark) list, next to the name of each saved Web file link.

<sup>98</sup> The URL for the default House favicon (the Great Seal of the United States) is:  
<http://www.house.gov/favicon.ico>

<sup>99</sup> Traditionally, favicons are named "favicon.ico" and are located in the root directory. This is not a requirement, however, as long as the favicon has a .ico extension and each page of the Web site has a <link rel="SHORTCUT ICON" /> tag with an "href" attribute.

<sup>100</sup> Jakob Nielsen's *Designing Web Usability*, 2000 (page 249), recommends:  
 make sure all URLs live forever and continue to point to relevant pages. Do not move pages around; instead keep them at the same URL. It is very annoying for authors of other sites when their links either stop working or turn into pointers to something different because the original pages has been moved and replaced with something new.

<sup>101</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age](#) (page 46) recommends that "[v]isitors to Member sites should also be able to initiate basic service requests – for flags, tours, photos, and documents, for example . . ."



**Federal Government** *see Government Resources***FirstGov**

FirstGov.gov (the U.S. Government information portal maintained by the U.S. General Services Administration) was renamed USA.gov, effective January 18, 2007. House Web sites should, therefore, not contain references to FirstGov.gov, except in a historical context. Additionally, House offices should link<sup>102</sup> to pages on [www.USA.gov](http://www.USA.gov), rather than to [www.FirstGov.gov](http://www.FirstGov.gov).

**Floor Statements** *see also WIDA*

Member offices should be encouraged to include Floor statements made by the Member.<sup>103</sup> The official text of all House Floor statements is available in the Congressional Record – which is available on the Internet (through Thomas).<sup>104</sup> Alternatively, offices may provide its own transcripts (see, e.g., [Rep. Jason Altmire's Web site](#), which uses WIDA and presents the material in chronological order and in subject order).

**Fonts** *see also Bolding; and Italics*

- (1) Style sheets, not <font> tags, should be used to set font colors, type faces, and type size.<sup>105</sup>
- (2) Font sizes (for material that will be displayed on a screen)<sup>106</sup> should be specified in ems or percentages, not in points, picas, centimeters, inches, or pixels.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>102</sup> The [Members' Congressional Handbook \(Web Sites, § 5\)](#), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at

[http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht\\_exit\\_msg.htm](http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht_exit_msg.htm)

<sup>103</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 17\)](#) indicates that providing Floor statements or speeches is one of the elements of a well-formed congressional Web site. At the time the report was compiled, 43.2% of all House Member, committee, and leadership Web sites included this information.

<sup>104</sup> Instructions for linking to specific documents in the Congressional Record are available at [http://www.congress.gov/help/THOMAS\\_links/cr.html](http://www.congress.gov/help/THOMAS_links/cr.html).

<sup>105</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 15.2.2 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the <font> tag as a deprecated element).

<sup>106</sup> In particular, this best practice is not intended to apply to style sheets where the value of the “media” property is “print”. Use of points, picas, centimeters, or inches in that type of style sheet is appropriate.

<sup>107</sup> [Checkpoint 3.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se relative rather than absolute units in markup language attribute values and style sheet property values. [Priority 2]

For example, in CSS, use 'em' or percentage lengths rather than 'pt' or 'cm', which are absolute units. If absolute units are used, validate that the rendered content is usable (refer to the [section on validation](#)).”

- (3) Style sheets associated with the <body> tag should be used to set the document-wide default values for text size, color, and typeface.<sup>108</sup> The <basefont> tag should not be used for this or any other purpose.<sup>109</sup>
- (4) When specifying a serif font for screen display, consider specifying Georgia, rather than Times New Roman. When specifying a sans-serif font for screen display, consider specifying Verdana, rather than Arial. Georgia and Verdana were designed for screen display, whereas Times New Roman and Arial were designed for printing.<sup>110</sup>

**Foreign Languages** *see Babel Fish; and Language of Text*

**Forms** *see also Alignment; Centering; Contact Information and Techniques #(1); Flags #(2); Graphics #(3); Social Security numbers; and Visiting Washington #(1)*

- (1) Identifying required fields:<sup>111</sup>
  - (a) If you use an asterisk to identify required fields, then include a title="required field" attribute in a tag pair surrounding the asterisk (e.g., <span title="required field">\*</span>).
  - (b) Consider highlighting in yellow<sup>112</sup> those cells that correspond to required fields. Highlighting those cells, however, should not be the only method used to indicate that the field is a required field.<sup>113</sup>
  - (c) Underlining should not be used to indicate that a field is a required field.<sup>114</sup>
  - (d) Any instructions indicating how to identify required fields should precede the form.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>108</sup> These may be set by the font-size, color, and font-family properties of style sheets.

<sup>109</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 15.2.2 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the <basefont> tag as a deprecated element).

<sup>110</sup> For information on the history of the Georgia and Verdana type faces, see Daniel Will-Harris’ [Georgia & Verdana Typefaces designed for the screen \(finally\)](#).

<sup>111</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(n\)](#)) provide that “When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.”

<sup>112</sup> Consider #FFFFCC.

<sup>113</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(c\)](#)) provide that “Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.” An identical standard is set out in [Checkpoint 2.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#).

<sup>114</sup> Jakob Nielsen, in [“Guidelines for Visualizing Links”](#) (May 10, 2004) recommends:

Don't underline any text that's not a link, even if your links aren't underlined. **Reserve underlining for links.** Because underlines provide a strong perceived affordance of clickability, users will be confused and disappointed if underlined text doesn't have an actual affordance to match this perception.

<sup>115</sup> The National Information Library Service of Australia’s [“Accessible Forms & Tables”](#) provides that accessible forms should:

Provide explanatory information *before* it is used:  
“♦ indicates required fields”.

- (2) Every form should either have a “submit” button (or its equivalent) or clear instructions as to how to activate the form.<sup>116</sup>
- (3) Normally, each input field (whether created by an <input>, <select>, or <textarea> tag) has text associated with it that explains what information should be put into the field (e.g., “First Name”, “Street Address”, or “City”).
- (a) If that explanatory text is present, it should be preceded by a <label> tag and followed by a </label> tag. The <label> tag should have a “for” attribute with a value equal to the value of the “id” attribute of the <input>, <select>, or <textarea> tag.<sup>117</sup> For example:
- ```
<label for="querytext">Search for:&nbsp;</label>
<input type="text" name="QueryText" id="querytext" size="10"
value="" />
```
- (b) If the explanatory text surrounds the <input>, <select>, or <textarea> tags, e.g.,

**User name:**

**(E-mail address:**  
**xxx@xxx.xxx)**

surround the entire string in the <label> tags. For instance,<sup>118</sup>

<sup>116</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(n\)](#)) provide that “When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.”

<sup>117</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(n\)](#)) provide that “When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.”

[Checkpoint 12.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should:

Associate labels explicitly with their controls. [Priority 2]

For example, in HTML use LABEL and its “for” attribute.

Note that it is **not** necessary to have the <label> tag immediately before the <input>, <select>, or <textarea> tag. [Checkpoint 10.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that:

[Until user agents](#) support explicit associations between labels and form controls, for all form controls with implicitly associated labels, ensure that the label is properly positioned.

[Priority 2]

The label must immediately precede its control on the same line (allowing more than one control/label per line) or be in the line preceding the control (with only one label and one control per line).

The Ohio State University Web Accessibility Center’s [“Test of Methods for Hidden Label Information in Forms”](#) indicates that Jaws 5.0, Window-Eyes 5.0, and Home Page Reader 3.021 are all able to make explicit associations between labels and form controls. Nevertheless, Paul Bohman, Director of Products and Services of WebAIM (Web Accessibility in Mind) at Utah State University [recommends](#) that <label> tags immediately precede the <input>, <select>, or <textarea> tags because even though

the explicit association of the label with the form control works very well when the user \*tabs through\* the form, even when the label and form element are in completely different parts of the page; but such a separation is still a problem if the user just \*listens to the page straight through\* without interacting with the form (i.e. tabbing between form elements).

<sup>118</sup> In [“Wrapping Form Labels,”](#) the Web Accessibility Center of Ohio State University suggests this technique in order to optimize accessibility by Jaws users.

```
<label for="user2">User name:
<input type="text" name="user2" id="user2" />
(E-mail address: xxx@xxx.xxx)</label>
```

- (c) If there is no explanatory text that can be associated with an <input>, <select>, or <textarea> element (e.g., were the label asks for a telephone number, but there are three <input> tags, one for the area code, one for the exchange, and one for the remaining four digits), then either:
1. use a “title” attribute in the tag to indicate what information is to go into the field; or
  2. add the information and put it between a <label> tag (with an appropriate “for” attribute) and a </label> tag; and give the <label> tag a class (e.g. class="hidden"), where the class places the text off screen and minimizes the size (e.g., position:absolute;left:-999em; font-size:1%);<sup>119</sup> or
  3. add the information and put it between a <label> tag (with an appropriate “for” attribute) and a </label> tag; and use the technique suggested in “[Labels.js: A Re-introduction to DHTML](#)” (December 23, 2001).
- (4) If a <select> tag has a substantial number of <option> tags associated with it, the <option> tags should be grouped together with <optgroup> tags. See, for example, the “What is the general topic of your message?” pull-down on [Rep. Dan Boren’s “Contact Dan Online Form”](#) page.<sup>120</sup>
- (5) Where a form has a pull-down menu of postal abbreviations, each <option> tag should have a “title” attribute that specifies the name of the state. See, e.g., the “[Contact Me About Constitutional Amendments](#)” page on Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.’s Web site.<sup>121</sup> Note, however, that from a usability and accessibility point of view, it is preferable to provide an <input> field where the visitor can type in the 2-character postal abbreviation, rather than pulling the information from a <select>/<option> pull-down.<sup>122</sup> If the form is only meant to be filled out be

<sup>119</sup> For a further discussion of these (and other) techniques, see Gez Lemon’s “[Invisible Form Prompts](#),” Juicy Studio, September 18, 2004.

<sup>120</sup> [Checkpoint 12.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should:

Divide large blocks of information into more manageable groups where natural and appropriate. [Priority 2]

For example, in HTML, use OPTGROUP to group OPTION elements inside a SELECT . . . The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(n\)](#)) provide that “When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.”

<sup>121</sup> [Checkpoint 4.2 \[priority 3\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites need to “[s]pecify the expansion of each abbreviation or acronym in a document where it first occurs.”

<sup>122</sup> Jakob Nielsen’s “[Does User Annoyance Matter?](#)” (March 26, 2007) notes that:

Making users suffer a drop-down menu to enter state abbreviations is one of many small annoyances that add up to a less efficient, less pleasant user experience. It’s worth fixing as many of these usability irritants as you can. . . .

Sites offer drop-downs for state abbreviations under the theory that doing so prevents input errors. But that’s not true: menus are more error prone than typing because the **mouse scroll wheel**

- visitors from the Member's state, it is preferable to hard-code the state value and use an `<input type="hidden">` tag to pass the postal abbreviation to the appropriate software.
- (6) JavaScripts, VBScripts, and other scripts should not be used as the exclusive way to submit forms.<sup>123</sup>
  - (7) Any `<input>` tag with a `type="text"` attribute should not have a "value" attribute.<sup>124</sup>
  - (8) If a `<form>` tag has a "name" attribute, it should also have an "id" attribute with the same value.<sup>125</sup>
  - (9) Within every group of radio buttons, the `<input>` tag for one of the buttons should have a `checked="checked"` attribute.<sup>126</sup>

often makes users inadvertently change the state field's content after they've moved their gaze elsewhere on the screen. In contrast, everybody knows how to type their own state's two letters, and it's always faster to enter this information through the keyboard than the mouse.

<sup>123</sup> [Checkpoint 6.3 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should:

Ensure that pages are usable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or not supported. If this is not possible, provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page. . . .

For example, ensure that links that trigger scripts work when scripts are turned off or not supported (e.g., do not use "javascript:" as the link target). If it is not possible to make the page usable without scripts, provide a text equivalent with the NOSCRIPT element, or use a server-side script instead of a client-side script, or provide an alternative accessible page as per [checkpoint 11.4. Refer also to guideline 1.](#)

The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(l\)](#)) also provide that "When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology."

<sup>124</sup> [Checkpoint 10.4 \[priority 3\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should, "[u]ntil user agents handle empty controls correctly, include default, place-holding characters in edit boxes and text areas." Donna Smillie (Web Accessibility Consultant for the Royal National Institute for the Blind (UK)), however, [indicates](#) that she is "Not aware of any user agents currently in use which have difficulty in handling empty form controls correctly. If anything, problems now tend to be presented for some users when default values are provided in edit boxes and text areas" (November 29, 2003). Jim Hatcher, in *Constructing Accessible Web Sites* (2002, p. 141) also notes that:

It used to be, when screen readers literally "read the screen", that they had difficulty detecting an input field that was blank. Now that screen readers use **Microsoft Active Accessibility (MSAA)** or the **Document Object Model (DOM)** of the browser, they do not have that problem anymore. The usefulness of Checkpoint 10.4 has passed.

For a contrasting opinion of whether Checkpoint 10.4 is no longer applicable, see "[Place Holding Text in Form Inputs](#)" Spider Trax, July 20, 2005.

<sup>125</sup> [Section 12.2.3 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specifications](#) provides that "The `id` and `name` attributes share the same name space. . . . When both attributes are used on a single element, their values must be identical."

[Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#), however, provides that accessible Web sites should "[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies." ([Section 4.10 of the W3C XHTML 1.0 Specification](#) designates the "name" attribute of the `<form>` tag as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>126</sup> [Section 17.2.1 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) provides that for every group of radio buttons, there should be at least one `<input type="radio">` tag with a "checked" attribute. [Section 4.5 of the W3C XHTML 1.0 Specification](#) provides that all attributes must be given values (e.g., `checked="checked"` not just: `checked`).



- (10) Within every <select> tag, one of the <option> tags should have a selected="selected" attribute.<sup>127</sup>

### **Frames and Iframes**<sup>128</sup> *see also Alignment; Banners #(3); and Centering*

- (1) When a frame (or iframe) calls in a page from outside the HOUSE.GOV domain, there needs to be a prominent message indicating that the material is not from the House of Representatives and that neither the office nor the House are responsible for the content.<sup>129</sup>
- (2) If a <frame> tag or a <iframe> tag has a "name" attribute, it should also have an "id" attribute with the same value.<sup>130</sup>
- (3) Frames may be used, as long as the <frame> or <iframe> tag has a "title" attribute that describes the specific function of that frame.<sup>131</sup>

**French language material** *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Offices should be encouraged to have FAQs in their Web site.<sup>132</sup> The Web site of the late [Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald](#), for instance, had FAQs as a primary navigation item.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>127</sup> [Section 17.6.1 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) provides that for every <select> tag, there should be at least one <option> tag with a "selected" attribute. [Section 4.5 of the W3C XHTML 1.0 Specification](#) provides that all attributes must be given values (e.g., selected="selected" not just: selected).

<sup>128</sup> For further material on use of iframes, see the [WSB Iframes Blog](#).

<sup>129</sup> The [Members' Congressional Handbook \(Web Sites, § 5\)](#), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at

[http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht\\_exit\\_msg.htm](http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht_exit_msg.htm)

<sup>130</sup> [Section 12.2.3 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specifications](#) provides that "The [id](#) and [name](#) attributes share the same name space. . . . When both attributes are used on a single element, their values must be identical."

[Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#), however, provides that accessible Web sites should "[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies." ([Section 4.10 of the W3C XHTML 1.0 Specification](#) designates the "name" attribute of the <frame> and <iframe> tags as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>131</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(i\)](#)) provide that "Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation."

[Checkpoint 12.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should "[t]itle each frame to facilitate frame identification and navigation." [Section 10 of the W3C HTML Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that <frame>, <frameset>, and <iframe> tags are all implementations of frames.

<sup>132</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 83\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites include FAQs about Congress and FAQs regarding constituent casework. The report ([pages 30 to 38 and 56](#)) praises the casework FAQs of Reps. Brian Baird, Xavier Becerra, Marion Berry, John Larson, John Linder, and Ed Royce; and the

**German language material** *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

**Government Resources** *see also District Information #(3)*

- (1) Member offices should be encouraged to include material about (or at least links to) the Federal courts that have jurisdiction within the Member's congressional district.<sup>134</sup> See Appendix 2: *Federal Judicial Branch* of this document for information on Federal Judicial Web sites.
- (2) On Web sites that have non-English pages, consider also providing links to government information pages that are linked from the Federal Citizen Information Center's Multilanguage Gateway.<sup>135</sup> Those Web sites with Spanish pages should be encouraged to include the Spanish version of the [CRS-maintained "Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance" page](#) on their Web site.<sup>136</sup>

**Grammar** *see Word Choice*

### Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance

Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with grant applicants)<sup>137</sup>, that are hosted on an HIR Web server should be encouraged to include the [CRS-maintained "Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance" page](#) in their Web site. Offices not hosted on an HIR Web server should be encouraged to iframe the page.<sup>138</sup> A

Congressional FAQ of Rep. Mike Honda. The report ([page 60](#)) also praises the Budget Committee (Democratic Office) [budget FAQ](#).

<sup>133</sup> See also, [Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney's Web site](#).

<sup>134</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 24\)](#) notes that "Too many congressional Web sites are generic — they fail to reflect the personality of the Member and the distinctiveness of the district or state."

<sup>135</sup> <http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm>.

<sup>136</sup> Concerning coding of foreign language material (and links to foreign language material), see "Language of Text", below.

<sup>137</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(p. 46\)](#) notes that "Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans' Affairs* Web site provides information on veterans' benefits for its key audience."

<sup>138</sup> Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the generic Federal Grants page. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's Web site. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with [Checkpoint 13.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) which provides that an accessible Web site should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

[Section 4 of the W3C Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) further provides that:

A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.

Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:

1. navigation bars
2. the primary content of a page

Spanish-language version of the [“Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance” page](#) is also available.

**Graphics** *see also Alignment; Backgrounds; Banners; Centering; Colors; Favicons; Lists #1; Multimedia files and Audio files; Photo Albums; and Tools for Validating Web Sites #3*

- (1) Optimize graphics to cut download time. [GIFBot](#) is an easy to use graphics optimizer from NetMechanic that works with JPGs as well as GIFs.
- (2) Where a small graphic will communicate as well as a large graphic, use the smaller graphic. Also consider using thumbnails that link large versions of the image.
- (3) Every graphic needs to include an “alt” attribute (or its equivalent).<sup>139</sup> The “alt” attribute (or its equivalent) should convey the information that the graphic provides.
  - (a) If the graphic includes text, the “alt” attribute (or its equivalent) should include that text.

...  
A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 63\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites should:

**Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn's* Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

<sup>139</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(a\)](#)) provide that “A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via “alt”, “longdesc”, or in element content).”

[Checkpoint 1.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should:

Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element (e.g., via “alt”, “longdesc”, or in element content). *This includes:* images, graphical representations of text (including symbols), image map regions, animations (e.g., animated GIFs), applets and programmatic objects, ascii art, frames, scripts, images used as list bullets, spacers, graphical buttons, sounds (played with or without user interaction), stand-alone audio files, audio tracks of video, and video. ...

For example, in HTML:

- Use “alt” for the IMG, INPUT, and APPLET elements, or provide a text equivalent in the content of the OBJECT and APPLET elements.
- For complex content (e.g., a chart) where the “alt” text does not provide a complete text equivalent, provide an additional description using, for example, “longdesc” with IMG or FRAME, a link inside an OBJECT element, or a [description link](#).
- For image maps, either use the “alt” attribute with AREA, or use the MAP element with A elements (and other text) as content.

[Section 13.8 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) provides that <img> tags and <area> tags must have “alt” attributes.



- (b) If the graphic conveys no information (e.g., it is purely decorative), then set the value of the “alt” attribute either to null ("" ) or to a single blank (" ").
- (c) When using an “alt” attribute with a value that exceeds 100 to 125 characters, also use a “longdesc” attribute.<sup>140</sup>
- (d) Phrases such as “photo of” or “link to” should not be used as part of an “alt” attribute (or its equivalent).<sup>141</sup>
- (e) Abbreviations should not be used in an “alt” attribute.
- (f) File names should not be used as the value of an “alt” attribute.<sup>142</sup>
- (4) Where a graphic consists principally of text, use actual text rather than an <img> graphic. Use style sheets to control size, color, background, positioning, etc. This approach maximizes accessibility, scalability, and download speed.<sup>143</sup>
- (5) It is recommended that headings (particularly on text-heavy pages that deal with multiple topics) be supplemented with relevant icons.<sup>144</sup>
- (6) Every <img> tag should either have a “width” attribute and a “height” attribute<sup>145</sup> or should have the height and width set through style sheets.

<sup>140</sup> Various standards have been suggested for how long an “alt” attribute should be before a “longdesc” attribute should also be used. The 100 to 125 character standard was recommended by Jon Brundage of [TecAccess](#).

Joe Clark’s [Building Accessible Websites](#) (2003), page 68, suggests using the “longdesc” attribute when the value of the “alt” attribute exceeds 1,024 characters.

[Standard 1.8 of the New York State Government’s Mandatory Technology Standard S04-001](#) (“Accessibility of State Agency Web-based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications,” October 25, 2006) provides that the “longdesc” attribute should be used when the value of the “alt” attribute exceeds 150 characters.

[Statewide Policy P130 Rev. 1.0 \(Attachment A\) from the Arizona Information Technology Agency](#) (September 15, 2006) suggests using the “longdesc” attribute when the value of the “alt” attribute exceeds 12 words.

The default on [HiSoft’s Cynthia Says](#) accessibility validating software to recommend use of the “longdesc” attribute is when the value of the “alt” attribute exceeds 81 characters.

<sup>141</sup> Roger Hudson’s [“Text Alternatives for Images”](#) (September 2003) recommends that Web designers “Avoid unnecessary terms. Don’t use words like ‘link’ or ‘click here’ for images that are links. Screen readers will indicate if something is a link or not.”

<sup>142</sup> Roger Hudson’s [“Text Alternatives for Images”](#) (September 2003) recommends that Web designers not “use the image file name as the alt. Alternative text like “02\_cc\_68.gif”, or even “building.jpg” are neither descriptive nor helpful.”

<sup>143</sup> [Section 7 of the W3C CSS Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that:

Content developers should use style sheets to style text rather than representing text in images. Using text instead of images means that the information will be available to a greater number of users (with speech synthesizers, braille displays, graphical displays, etc.). Using style sheets will also allow users to override author styles and change colors or fonts sizes more easily.

If it is necessary to use a bitmap [e.g., a .gif file] to create a text effect (special font, transformation, shadows, etc.) the bitmap must be accessible (see the sections on [text equivalents](#) and [alternative pages](#)).

<sup>144</sup> [Checkpoint 14.2 \[priority 3\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[s]upplement text with graphic or auditory presentations where they will facilitate comprehension of the page.”

<sup>145</sup> [Section 13.7.1 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) provides that:

- (7) The width of borders around graphics should be set by style sheets,<sup>146</sup> not by the “border” attribute of the <img> tag.<sup>147</sup>
- (8) When setting a buffer between a graphic and surrounding text, do not use the hspace or vspace attributes of the <img> tag – instead use style-sheets.<sup>148</sup>
- (9) If an <img> tag has a “name” attribute, it should also have an “id” attribute with the same value.<sup>149</sup>
- (10) Graphics originally developed for (or originally paid for by) an election campaign should not be used on House Web sites.<sup>150</sup>
- (11) When modifying a graphic, it is normally best to conduct modifications in the following order:
  - (a) red-eye correcting
  - (b) blemishes and dark or shiny spots
  - (c) color levels
  - (d) color balance
  - (e) brightness and contrast
  - (f) shadows and highlighting
  - (g) resizing
  - (h) cropping
  - (i) sharpening
  - (j) saving
- (12) When using Photoshop:
  - **Red Eye:** avoid using the Red Eye tool (Shift-J) because it tends to be too extreme (turning dark gray whenever it finds any red). Instead,

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The height and width attributes give user agents an idea of the size of an image or object so that they may reserve space for it and continue rendering the document while waiting for the image data.

<sup>146</sup> Use the “border-width” style sheets property together with the “border-style” property.

<sup>147</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 13.7.3 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “border” attribute of the <img> tag as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>148</sup> The “padding-left,” “padding-right,” “padding-bottom,” and “padding-top” style sheets properties provide the functionality previously provided by the “hspace” and “vspace” attributes.

[Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 13.7.2 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “hspace” and “vspace” attributes as deprecated attributes).

<sup>149</sup> [Section 12.2.3 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specifications](#) provides that “The [id](#) and [name](#) attributes share the same name space. . . . When both attributes are used on a single element, their values must be identical.”

[Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#), however, provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 4.10 of the W3C XHTML 1.0 Specification](#) designates the “name” attribute of the <img> tag as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>150</sup> The July 26, 2006 Advisory Memorandum of the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct ([Use of Campaign Funds and Campaign-Founded Resources for Official House Purposes](#)) provides that Congressional office Web sites are not to be paid for with campaign funds. Offices with questions about the extent of that prohibition should be urged to contact the Committee for either informal advice or for a formal written opinion.

zoom in (Control-+) on the problem area. Use the Marquee select (Shift-M) or the Lasso select (Shift-L) to capture each eye (Shift-mousedrag to add to a selection, Alt-mousedrag to subtract from a selection). Use Hue/Saturation (Control-U) and attenuate the middle Saturation slider. Try darkening a little so you do not end up with gray eyes. Zoom to 100% (double click the zoom tool) to see what it looks like within the entire image.

- **Blemishes, Dark Spots, and Shiny Spots:** use the spot healing brush (Shift-J). This works best on blemishes that are surrounded by the correct tonal value. Make your brush width 1½ to 2 times the width of the blemish and click once over the blemish (the blemish should disappear). For areas with the correct tonal value only on one side of the blemish, use the healing brush. Alt-Select an area of the image that has the tonal value you want and then drag your mouse on the blemish. If the result is too harsh, then Edit-Fade immediately after to attenuate the effect. Alternatively, step backward and choose a different Mode, e.g., Screen, Lighten, or Darken. Another approach is to try Smear (Shift-R) to smooth out the result.
- **Levels:** use the Control-L function. The ideal curve for levels is a double bell curve tailing off at the edges of the window with the left tail at black; the right tail at white; and the center at gray. If there are peaks at the edges, there is too much contrast. If the curve does not reach the edges, then the contrast is too low.
- **Color Balance:** use Control-B. This is especially useful if the image is scanned or the flash was incorrectly set. Color balance is usually used to reduce the red in the midtones or highlights of an image or, conversely, to correct for overly sallow skin tone.
- **Brightness and Contrast:** use Image: Adjustments: Brightness/Contrast. Avoid setting the brightness and contrast control above 20 or below -20.
- **Shadows and Highlights:** use Image: Adjustments: Shadow/Highlight. Once adjusting the shadows or highlights, it is usually necessary to readjust the color balance and or the brightness and contrast.
- **Resizing:** use “Bicubic” as the “Resample Image” value.

**Graphs** *see Charts and Graphs*

**Greek language material** *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

### Greetings

- (1) Member offices should consider having information on their Web site as to how a constituent can receive greetings from the Member to commemorate events of “public distinction” (e.g., graduation from high school or college;

becoming an Eagle Scout; receiving U.S. citizenship; or election or appointment to public office).<sup>151</sup>

<sup>151</sup> The House Ethics Committee's [Laws, Rules and Standards of Conduct on Campaign Activity](#) (pp. 47-48) provides that:

**Letters, Mailings and Other Communications that Are Not Frankable in Content.** At times Members wish to send letters or mailings, or make other communications, that are not frankable in content under the House Franking Regulations, and hence may not be created or sent using official House resources (see [above](#)). Examples of such communications include messages to constituents that are not official in nature, such as birthday greetings, holiday greetings, and letters of condolence. In addition, while letters of congratulations for a public distinction are frankable, other letters of congratulation, such as for years of service at a business, or retirement, are not frankable. Under House Rules, a Member **may** use campaign funds and resources to create and send cards, letters and certificates of these types to his or her constituents.

However, such materials may **not** be produced in or sent from any House office, and may **not** be produced or sent using any other House resource, including the office equipment or staff while on official time.

**Example 3.** Congressman A wishes to create a "Congressman A Award of Merit" certificate that he will present to constituents who perform meritorious acts or services. The certificates may be printed with campaign funds, but their content must comply with the same restrictions that apply to campaign letterhead (see [below](#)). In addition, official House resources may not be used to promote the certificates, or in connection with their presentation.

The House Franking Commission's [Franking Manual](#), (pp. 12-13), further defines an event of "public distinction":

#### 8. Congratulations

Section 3210(a)(3)(f) [of title 39 of the U.S. Code] authorizes the franking of "mail matter expressing congratulations to a person who has achieved some public distinction."

The Commission emphasizes that these messages of congratulations are limited to matters of public distinction as opposed to matters of personal achievement. The following examples are illustrative, and not all-inclusive:

##### *Examples of public distinction:*

|                                          |                                        |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Election or appointment to public office | Publicly notable awards and honors     |
| U.S. Citizenship                         | Eagle Scout/Gold Star                  |
| High School Graduation                   | Heroism                                |
|                                          | Appointment to a U.S. military academy |

In the above examples, there is a public purpose to be served in establishing communication with newly elected or appointed public officials on a Federal, state or local level; with new citizens and graduates; and with honorees for outstanding public service to promote the public good.

Letters consisting solely of birthday, wedding, anniversary, retirement or condolence messages are not frankable.

However, legislative correspondence, which otherwise is frankable, may contain an incidental statement of condolence or of congratulations for personal achievement. For example, a response to a constituent's request for assistance in obtaining survivor annuity benefits may contain an incidental statement of condolence. Similarly, a letter enclosing Federal publications may contain a brief congratulatory message for personal achievement, provided the substance of the letter focuses on the content of the publication or other officially related subject matter rather than on the congratulatory remark.

Note that neither *Campaign Activity* nor the *Franking Manual* specifically address whether House Web sites can invite constituents to request Member recognitions of birthdays, anniversaries, etc. What the *Campaign Booklet* and the *Franking Manual* do is prohibit (or at least restrict) the use of official funds, staff time, or other House resources to prepare and mail such recognitions.

- (2) Member offices should consider having information on their Web site as to how a constituent can receive greetings from the President for important birthdays, anniversaries, and similar occasions.<sup>152</sup>

**Headings** *see also Alignment; Graphics # (5); Tables # (1); and Titles*

- (1) Headings within a page should be coded with h tags (highest level being <h1>, second highest level <h2>, etc.). Use style sheets to set the typeface, bolding, font-size, alignment, etc. so that the result is both esthetically pleasing and consistent throughout the site.<sup>153</sup>
- (2) The words that convey the most information should be at the beginning of each heading – preferably in the first two words.<sup>154</sup>
- (3) Headings should generally not exceed 60 characters.<sup>155</sup>
- (4) An “id” attribute should be associated with each heading so that links can go directly to that spot.

**Hebrew language material** *see Government Resources # (2); Language of Text: and Linking # (11)*

**Hindi language material** *see Government Resources # (2); Language of Text: and Linking # (11)*

**Hmong language material** *see Government Resources # (2); Language of Text: and Linking # (11)*

<sup>152</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation’s January 2002 report [Congress Online: Assessing and Improving Capitol Hill Web Sites](#) (p. 36) praises [Rep. Mike Pence’s Web site](#) for including information on Presidential greetings. See also, [“Presidential Greetings” page of the late Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald](#).

<sup>153</sup> [Checkpoint 3.5 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should “[u]se header elements to convey document structure and use them according to specification.”

[Section 1.2.1 of the W3C HTML Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that “Since some users skim through a document by navigating its headings, it is important to use them appropriately to convey document structure. Users should order heading elements properly. For example, in HTML, H2 elements should follow H1 elements, H3 elements should follow H2 elements, etc. Content developers should not “skip” levels (e.g., H1 directly to H3). Do not use headings to create font effects; use [style sheets to change font styles](#) for example.”

In the Jaws screen reader, Insert+F6 generates a list of headers.

<sup>154</sup> [Checkpoint 13.8 \[priority 3\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[p]lace distinguishing information at the beginning of headings, paragraphs, lists, etc.”

Jakob Nielsen’s article [“F-Shaped Pattern For Reading Web Content”](#) (April 17, 2006), based on a study of the eye movements of 232 Web site users, recommends that Web designers:

**Start subheads, paragraphs, and bullet points with information-carrying words** that users will notice when scanning down the left side of your content . . . They’ll read the third word on a line much less often than the first two words.

Though Nielsen’s study was based on sighted users, the technique he suggests is useful not only for sighted individuals, but also for blind individuals – since an often-used technique in Jaws and Window-Eyes is to have the browser skip from heading to heading or from list to list.

<sup>155</sup> Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger in their *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 277) recommend that headings “be short (60 characters maximum) and meaningful.”



## Homeland Security threat index

Offices with Web sites that display the Department of Homeland Security's threat advisory icon should be encouraged to make use of the icon that the automatically changes as the Department's threat index changes. Instructions for using the icon on a Web site can be found at:

<http://listserv.gsa.gov/cgi-bin/wa.exe?A2=ind0303&L=EXPRESS-L&P=R2602&I=-3>.

## Homepage *see also Navigation #(1) and (7); and Privacy Policy #(2)*

One of the primary goals of a Congressional Web site is to get constituents to return in the future. The first thing that most constituents will see, when they go to the office's site is the part of the homepage that will fit in a screen without scrolling down.<sup>156</sup> It is strongly recommended that as much of that initial screen be composed of fresh, frequently updated information as possible.<sup>157</sup> Offices should be encouraged to not take up any appreciable amount of space on the homepage for a welcome message.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>156</sup> Usability testing conducted by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger and reported in their *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 32), indicates that only 23% of first-time visitors of homepages bother to scroll down. Second-time (and subsequent) visitors only scroll down 16% to 14% of the time.

<sup>157</sup> The [October 10, 2006, issue of the Congressional Management Foundation's Congress Online Newsletter](#) suggests that homepages:

- **Promote a Constituent Service.** The best real estate on [Sen. Jeff Bingaman's \(D-NM\)](#) home page is devoted to the constituent services provided by the office, such as casework and help for small businesses. You could also rotate the various services to coincide with important dates (flags for Veterans Day, student loan assistance before colleges and universities begin a new year) or focus on one specific area, like [Rep. Mike Capuano \(D-MA\)](#) is with his immigration casework. Though not "traditional" constituent services, [Rep. Mary Bono \(R-CA\)](#) has information on earthquake preparedness and links to pandemic flu resources on her home page, while [Rep. Jim Moran \(D-VA\)](#) links to CRS reports on hot topics, all of which are of interest to constituents.
- **Highlight a Legislative Priority.** One of [Rep. John Peterson's \(R-PA\)](#) top priorities in Congress is [revitalizing rural communities](#), such as those in his district, through economic development and job creation. This topic is front and center on his home page, giving constituents faster access (one less click) to his ideas for strengthening their communities and links to several dozen resources on the topic. On the other side of the Hill, [Sen. Tom Harkin's \(D-IA\)](#) home page is currently highlighting his efforts to improve the mental health and wellbeing of veterans.
- **Focus on a Local Issue or Current Event.** October may be slow for legislative work, but there are always current events and local activities of interest to your constituents. In his special features section on his home page, [Rep. Richard Baker \(R-LA\)](#) spotlights Louisiana's 529 College Savings Program and LSU's ROTC program. He also highlights the CBS Early Show's stop in Baton Rouge as well as ongoing Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts. [Rep. Carolyn Maloney \(D-NY\)](#) and [Sen. John Ensign \(R-NV\)](#) also showcase local issues on their home pages.

<sup>158</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's 1999 report *Building Web Sites Constituents Will Use* (page 16) recommends against welcome messages or cover pages. The CMF report notes that:

Both of these practices are frustrating because they prevent visitors from getting to useful information as quickly as possible. They require visitors to click or scroll in order to access the information they came to get, and neither of them serves much purpose except to take up valuable space. "Welcome to my Web site. I hope you find what you are looking for," is a waste of visitors' time.



**HOUSE.GOV Domain** *see also Linking #(1)*

Every Web page that is part of a Member's Web site or a committee's Web site must be in the HOUSE.GOV domain.<sup>159</sup>

**<hr> tags** *see also Alignment; and Centering*

- (1) Instead of using the "noshade" attribute or the "size" attribute in <hr> tags, use style sheets.<sup>160</sup>
- (2) Instead of using the "size" attribute in <hr> tags, use the "height" property in style sheets.<sup>161</sup>

**HTML** *see also <!DOCTYPE> declarations*

- (1) Use either the <code> tag<sup>162</sup> or the <pre> tag to display HTML code on a Web page. The <listing>, <plaintext>, and <xpm> tags should not be used for this or any other purpose.<sup>163</sup>

Rep. Mike Honda has addressed this issue by not including his welcome message on his homepage, but instead providing a link to the [message](#) – which is available in text (in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese) and in video (at three different resolutions).

Based on extensive usability testing, Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, in *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (p. 30) recommend that homepage welcome messages not exceed 10 to 20 words.

<sup>159</sup> The [Members' Congressional Handbook \(Web Sites\)](#), § 2, issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

Member's Web sites must be located in the HOUSE.GOV host-domain and may be maintained by either House Information Resources (HIR), the Member's congressional office, or a private vendor.

The [Committees' Congressional Handbook \(Web Site Regulations, General\)](#), § 3, issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

Web sites must be located in the HOUSE.GOV host-domain and may be maintained either by House Information Resources (HIR), the committee office, or a private vendor.

<sup>160</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should "[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation." Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should "[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies." ([Section 15.3 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the "noshade" attribute of the <hr> tag as a deprecated attribute).

Using the "border:0" style sheet property along with the "background-color" style sheets property provides the same result in Internet Explorer 6.0, Netscape 7.1, and FireFox 1.0.7 as using the "noshade" attribute.

<sup>161</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should "[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation." Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should "[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies." ([Section 15.3 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the "size" attribute of the <hr> tag as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>162</sup> [Section 9.2.1 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#), provides that the <code> tag "Designates a fragment of computer code."

<sup>163</sup> [Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should "[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies." (The W3C [HTML 3.2 Specification](#) designates the <listing>, <plaintext>, and <xmp> tags as deprecated elements).

Unlike the <listing>, <plaintext>, and <xmp> tags, the <code> tag and the <pre> tag will not display paired angle brackets (i.e., "<" and ">") in their raw state. To display either of those characters within a <pre> requires that they first be translated into their entity representations (e.g., &lt; or &gt;).

The default versions of the <code> and <pre> tags differ in most browser implementations in that <code> automatically word wraps, while <pre> does not.

- (2) Rather than using the “version” attribute of the <html> tag, place a <!DOCTYPE> declaration at the beginning of each page.<sup>164</sup>
- (3) There should be an <html> tag between the <!DOCTYPE> declaration and the <head> tag on each Web page. The <html> tag should include an xmlns=”http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml” attribute, a “lang” attribute (indicating the primary language used on the Web page), and an “xml:lang” attribute (also indicating the primary language used on the Web page).<sup>165</sup> For example, a Web page that is written primarily in American English should use: <html xmlns=”http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml” lang=”en-US” xml:lang=”en-US”>
- (4) Before publishing a new or revised Web site, at least some pages on the site should be validated through the W3C Markup Validation Service (<http://validator.w3.org/>).<sup>166</sup> The service is free and will verify that all of the HTML coding is grammatically correct.

**Icons** *see Favicons; and Graphics*

**Id attribute** *see also Forms #(3) and (8); Frames and Iframes #(2); Graphics #(9); Headings #(4); Image Maps #(1); Linking #(10); and Tables #(2)*

When assigning a value of an “id” attribute, use the purpose of the data that the attribute’s tag relates to, not how the data is to be portrayed – the “id” value should indicate function, not form. For instance, “hotTopics” would be an appropriate value for an “id” attribute, but “whiteOnRed” would not be an appropriate value.<sup>167</sup>

**Identity Theft Information** *see also Consumer Protection Information*

- (1) Member offices (and offices that deal with identity theft issues) should consider including identity information on their Web site. The Federal Trade Commission’s May 2006 *For the Consumer: Congressional Outreach Projects*

<sup>164</sup> [Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 7.3 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “version” attribute of the <html> tag as a deprecated attribute)..

<sup>165</sup> [Section 3.1.1\(3\) of the W3C XHTML 1.0 Specification \(2<sup>nd</sup> edition\)](#) provides that:

The root element of the document must contain an xmlns declaration for the XHTML namespace [[XMLNS](#)]. The namespace for XHTML is defined to be <http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml>. An example root element might look like:

```
<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" xml:lang="en" lang="en">
```

<sup>166</sup> [Checkpoint 3.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should “validate to published formal grammars.”

<sup>167</sup> Section 1 of the W3C [Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that:

When designing a document or series of documents, content developers should strive first to identify the desired structure for their documents before thinking about how the documents will be presented to the user. Distinguishing the structure of a document from how the content is presented offers a number of advantages, including improved accessibility, manageability, and portability.

Jeffrey Zeldman’s, *Designing With Web Standards* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, [2006]), p.180, recommends that Semantic or meta-structural names (names that explain the function performed by elements contained within) are best. You would feel pretty silly having labeled a part of your site “orangebox” when the client decides to go with blue. You would feel sillier still revising your style sheets under a deadline six months from now and trying desperately to remember whether “Gladys” was a navigational area, a sidebar, a search form, or what.

Using *FTC Resources*, sites as examples the identity theft pages of the following Congressional offices: [Rep. Melissa Bean](#), [Rep. Mike Honda](#), [Rep. Darlene Hooley](#), [Sen. Tom Harkin](#), [Sen. Herb Kohl](#), and [Sen. Joe Lieberman](#).

- (2) When linking to identity theft Web pages from the Federal Trade Commission, consider using one of the icons available at [http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer/partners\\_buttons.html](http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer/partners_buttons.html).

**Iframes** *see Frames and Iframes*

**Image Maps** *see also Maps #(2)*

- (1) If a <map> tag has a “name” attribute, it should also have an “id” attribute with the same value<sup>168</sup>
- (2) Do not use server-side image maps if the same functionality can be provided using client-side image maps.<sup>169</sup> (Client-side image maps have a “usemap” attribute in the <img> tag. Server-side image maps have an ismap=”ismap” attribute<sup>170</sup> in the <img> tag.) If the same functionality cannot be provided using client-side image maps, provide an equivalent text link for each active region in the server-side image map.<sup>171</sup>
- (3) Every <area> tag should have an “alt” attribute.<sup>172</sup>

<sup>168</sup> [Section 12.2.3 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specifications](#) provides that “The [id](#) and [name](#) attributes share the same name space. . . . When both attributes are used on a single element, their values must be identical.”

[Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#), however, provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 4.10 of the W3C XHTML 1.0 Specification](#) designates the “name” attribute of the <map> tag as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>169</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(f\)](#)) provide that “Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.” Likewise, [Checkpoint 9.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “Provide client-side image maps instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.”

Jim Thatcher in *Web Accessibility: Web Standards and Regulatory Compliance* (2006, pp. 204 to 205) indicates that there are no longer any geometric shapes can be defined in a server-side image map that cannot also be defined in a client-side image map and therefore “there is no case where a server-side map is permitted under the Section 508 provision §1194.22(f) or WCAG Checkpoint 9.1.”

<sup>170</sup> [Section 4.5 of the W3C XHTML 1.0 Specification](#) provides that all attributes must be given values (e.g., ismap=”ismap” not just: ismap).

<sup>171</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(e\)](#)) provide that “Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.” Likewise, [checkpoint 1.2 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[p]rovide redundant text links for each active region of a server-side image map.”

<sup>172</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(a\)](#)) provide that “A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via “alt”, “longdesc”, or in element content).”

[Checkpoint 1.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should:

Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element (e.g., via “alt”, “longdesc”, or in element content). *This includes:* images, graphical representations of text (including symbols), image map regions, animations (e.g., animated GIFs), applets and programmatic objects, ascii art, frames, scripts, images used as list bullets, spacers, graphical buttons, sounds (played with or without user interaction), stand-alone audio files, audio tracks of video, and video. . . .

**Images** *see Favicons; Graphics; and Photo Albums*

## Immigration

- (1) The Immigration and Naturalization Service was abolished March 2003 and its service and benefits functions were transferred to the newly created [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#). The law enforcement functions on the INS were moved to the newly created [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#). Both USCIS and ICE are agencies within the Department of Homeland Security.<sup>173</sup> House Web sites should, therefore, not contain references to INS, except in a historical context.<sup>174</sup>
- (2) U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services reorganized its Web site on November 1, 2006. USCIS non-homepage links added to House Web sites before November 1, 2006, should be checked to make sure they are still valid links. A list of frequently accessed pages is available at:

[http://www.uscis.gov/files/pressrelease/WebFactSheet\\_110106.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/pressrelease/WebFactSheet_110106.pdf)

**<input> tags** *see Forms*

## Internships

Each office that sponsors internships should be encouraged to include information (on their Web site) as to how to apply, as well as a description of the duties and responsibilities (see, e.g., the Web site of the late [Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald](#)).<sup>175</sup>

**Issues and Voting Information** *see also Dates and Time #(2); Legislative Material; Navigation #(4); and WIDA #(3)*

- (1) Offices should be encouraged to have a section of their Web site devoted to the Member's stands on issues.<sup>176</sup>

For example, in HTML: . . .

- For image maps, either use the "alt" attribute with AREA, or use the MAP element with A elements (and other text) as content.

<sup>173</sup> For the disposition of other functions formerly performed by INS, see

<http://149.101.23.2/graphics/othergov/roadmap.htm>.

<sup>174</sup> The [January 30, 2006 edition of the Congressional Management Foundation's Congress Online newsletter](#) notes that "A lot of House sites have outdated or incorrect links. The most frustrating ones [included] . . . those linking to INS (it changed to USCIS in 2003!). Web sites continually change, so it's important to periodically review any link that goes off your site, especially at the beginning of each Congress so you don't have visitors looking at old information."

A May 10 to June 9, 2006 review of House Web sites by the Web Systems Branch of House Information Resources (now CAO-Web Solutions Branch) indicated that 21% of House Member Web sites contained at least one reference to the INS as if the agency was still operational.

<sup>175</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 46\)](#) provides that "Visitors to Member sites should also be able . . . to solicit assistance with . . . internship processes. Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online."

<sup>176</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 45\)](#) notes that, "Most citizens think of legislation in terms of broad issues, rather than specific bills. They especially want to understand the issues in Congress that affect them directly."

- (2) Member offices are encouraged to have a portion of their Web site devoted to the Member's voting record.<sup>177</sup>

To implement this recommendation, Member offices are urged **not** to simply link to the "Legislation & Votes" page<sup>178</sup> on the Web site of the Clerk of the House. The Clerk's Legislation & Votes page includes much more information than just roll call votes and does not include an explanation of how to understand the roll call vote information.

As an alternative to simply linking to the Clerk's "Legislation & Votes" page, it is recommended that Member office Web sites have a page (or at least part of a page) devoted to roll call votes and that that page include at a minimum links that go directly to the roll call vote information of each of the sessions of the current Congress and Session<sup>179</sup>, as well as a link to the roll call vote information for any relevant previous Congresses and Sessions. For example,

- roll call votes of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session - <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2007/index.asp>
- roll call votes of the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> session - <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2006/index.asp>

Beyond these links, consider also providing an explanation of how to read the roll call vote information. [Rep. Steve Israel's web site](#) contains an explanation of the Clerk's layout that other offices may want to adopt (a similar explanation is also available on the Library of Congress' [Thomas web site](#)). [Rep. Maurice Hinchey](#) includes links to the appropriate pages of the Clerk's and Library of Congress' web sites, but also uses WIDAinc to provide material on roll call votes of particular interest.

- (3) Where there are issues (or legislation) that the Member is particularly invested in, the office should be urged to make part of the Web site into a substantial source of information on the issues (or legislation).<sup>180</sup>

<sup>177</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 4\)](#) notes that, "A recurring theme of our focus groups can be summed up in one word: accountability. Participants stated that Member Web sites that conveyed a sense of accountability and transparency deserved greater trust than those who seemed to be 'hiding something.' Features that were deemed to inspire trust included: voting records, voting rationales, schedules, and unbiased issue information."

The [Congressional Management Foundation's 2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 60\)](#) notes that:

Congressional Web sites can demonstrate accountability by providing voting records, rationales for key votes, and schedules – and they can do so without overburdening their staffs. Constituents are probably not interested in knowing about every meeting that takes place or every vote taken. Stick to the most relevant and current information: meetings with constituents, public Member appearances in the district or state, committee hearings, the House and Senate floor schedule.

<sup>178</sup> <http://clerk.house.gov/legislative/legvotes.html>

<sup>179</sup> The [January 30, 2006 edition of the Congressional Management Foundation's Congress Online newsletter](#) cautions that "Web sites continually change, so it's important to periodically review any link that goes off your site, especially at the beginning of each Congress so you don't have visitors looking at old information."

<sup>180</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age, \(p. 31\)](#) praises Sen. Debbie Stabenow's Web site for "providing a thorough, one-stop shop for information about [prescription drug legislation]". The CMF report notes that Sen. Stabenow's



- (4) Where the Member has made floor statements (or issued press releases) on an issue that is included in the issues section of their Web site, include a link to the text of each statement (and press release).<sup>181</sup>

**Italian language material** *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

### Italics

Where italics would be appropriate on a visual display, use <em> tags, not <i> tags.<sup>182</sup>

**Japanese language material** *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

**JavaScript** *see Scripts*

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Web site “encourages visitors to share their experiences with her. She then relates these stories to her colleagues on the Senate floor. Senator Stabenow is harnessing the power of the Web”.

The Congressional Management Foundation’s [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(pages 59 to 60\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites:

- **Include information on a variety of issues:** Constituents have a wide range of interests and priorities. Citizens’ concerns about issues important to them should be addressed on Congressional Web sites. The best sites provide information on district or state issues, national issues, issues on which the Member is active, and some even include current “hot topic” issues that appear in the headlines at a given time.
- **Provide access to neutral sources of information:** You increase the value of your site and improve your credibility if you provide access to resources that will help visitors find answers to questions that your site does not address. Supporting information allows visitors to explore issues in greater depth, which will make them more likely to view you positively, even if they do not share your opinions and conclusions.

<sup>181</sup> See, e.g., the [“Holt on the Issues” section of Rep. Rush Holt’s Web site](#).

For offices that use WIDA, use [WIDA’s “issue” feature and WIDAinc](#) to automatically place links to the relevant press releases on the appropriate issue page.

The Congressional Management Foundation’s [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 63\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites

**Organize by issue type in addition to content type:** *Rep. Jim Langevin’s* Web site allows users seeking information about an issue to view press releases, speeches, and CRS reports on the subject. When users are interested in a topic, they want everything related to it, without having to start a new search in every section of the site. Even simply linking to related sections of your Web site and cross-referencing your content can go a long way toward making your site usable.

<sup>182</sup> [Section 3.1 of the W3C HTML Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that “The proper HTML elements should be used to mark up emphasis: [EM](#) and [STRONG](#). The [B](#) and [I](#) elements should not be used; they are used to create a visual presentation effect. The EM and STRONG elements were designed to indicate structural emphasis that may be rendered in a variety of ways (font style changes, speech inflection changes, etc.).”

Perhaps the one legitimate exception to this standard (and even then, one to be used with care) is when you are reproducing text that originally existed as non-World Wide Web printed text. As Paul Ford notes in [“Processing Processing”](#) (September 2, 2003) (cited in Jeffrey Zeldman’s, *Designing With Web Standards* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, [2006], p. 175):

When I’m publishing content from 1901 and it’s in italics, it’s in *italics*, not emphasized. Typography has a semantics that is subtle, changing, and deeply informed by history.



**Kids' pages**

- (1) COPPA (the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998)<sup>183</sup> provides extensive requirements for Web sites (or Web pages) aimed at pre-teenage children that request personal information<sup>184</sup>. The requirements include getting parental consent before collecting, using, or disclosing personal information from children.<sup>185</sup> The easiest way to comply with the Act is to not ask for personal information (including first or last names, postal addresses, e-mail addresses, or telephone numbers) on Web pages aimed at children.<sup>186</sup>
- (2) The primary audience of a kids' page is different than the primary audience of most other pages on a House Web site. Kids pages should be kid friendly (see, e.g., [Rep. Henry Hyde's kid's zone](#)<sup>187</sup> – the basic content for this page is now available as a server-side include on the HIR Unix Web server that the CAO-Web Solutions Branch is now maintaining<sup>188</sup>).<sup>189</sup>

**Korean language material** *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #2); Language of Text: and Linking #11)*

**<label> tags** *see Forms*

<sup>183</sup> The full text of the Act can be found at [title 15, chapter 91 of the U.S. Code](#). The full text of the regulations issued by authority of the Act can be found at [title 16, part 312 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#). While the Act does not, on its own terms, apply to Congressional Web sites, House offices should be encouraged to comply to avoid being put in the position of someone pointing to the site and asking why is a Congressional Web site not complying with the minimum standards that Congress has mandated for commercial Web sites.

<sup>184</sup> "Personal information" is defined in [§ 312.2 of the COPPA regulations](#) as:  
individually identifiable information about an individual collected online, including:  
(a) A first and last name;  
(b) A home or other physical address including street name and name of a city or town;  
(c) An e-mail address or other online contact information, including but not limited to an instant messaging user identifier, or a screen name that reveals an individual's e-mail address;  
(d) A telephone number;  
(e) A Social Security number;  
(f) A persistent identifier, such as a customer number held in a cookie or a processor serial number, where such identifier is associated with individually identifiable information; or a combination of a last name or photograph of the individual with other information such that the combination permits physical or online contacting; or  
(g) Information concerning the child or parents of that child that the operator collects online from the child and combines with an identifier described in this definition.

<sup>185</sup> The narrow exceptions to the parental consent requirement, are set out in [§ 312.5\(c\) of the COPPA regulations](#).

<sup>186</sup> If an office insists on asking for personal information from children, the office should be referred to the parental consent requirements set out in [§ 312.5 of the COPPA regulations](#).

<sup>187</sup> Similar layouts are used on the Web sites of [Rep. Jason Altmire](#), [Rep. Dan Boren](#), [Rep. Phil English](#), [Rep. Jeff Fortenberry](#), [Rep. Gwen Moore](#), and [Rep. Randy Neugebauer](#).

<sup>188</sup> `<!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Kids_content.htm" -->`

<sup>189</sup> *Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. xxiii), notes, however, that "our usability studies with teenage users show that teens don't want business sites or government sites that are made to look as if they were created by teenagers when they were not."

**Language of Text** *see also Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); and Linking #(11)*

- (1) The language codes used in HTML tags should conform to the [RFC 4646](#) standard. Instructions for using the standard are set out in Appendix 5: *Language Identification Codes* of this document.
- (2) The primary language of each page should be identified<sup>190</sup> with the appropriate attributes of the <html>, <meta name="DC.language">, **and** <meta http-equiv="Content-Language"> tags:
  - (a) In the <html> tag, use the “lang” attribute and the “xml:lang” attribute to identify the primary language of the page. For instance, on a page where English (as used in the United States) is the primary language, the <html> tag should be:
 

```
<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" xml:lang="en-US"
lang="en-US">
```
  - (b) In both the <meta name="DC.language"> tag and the <meta http-equiv="Content-Language"> tag, use the “content” attribute to identify the primary language of the page. For instance, on a page where English (as used in the United States) is the primary language, the tags should be:
 

```
<meta name="DC.language" scheme="DCTERMS.RFC4646"
content="en-US" />
<meta http-equiv="Content-Language" content="en-US" />
```
- (3) When the language on a page changes, the change should be identified<sup>191</sup> by using the “lang” attribute and “xml:lang” attribute in the HTML tags surrounding the text. For instance, on a page that is primarily in English, but includes in Spanish (as used in Puerto Rico) the phrase
 

Subcomité Congressional Aprueba Proyecto de Ley de Fortuño

 the phrase could be coded as
 

```
<span lang="es-PR" xml:lang="es-PR">Subcomit&#233; Congressional
Aprueba Proyecto de Ley de Fortu&#241;o</span>
```

**Lao language material** *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(11)***Law references** *see U.S. Code***Layout** *see also Style Sheets; and Tables #(3)*

- (1) Where practical, font sizes, margins, widths, heights, and other similar measure values (for material that will be displayed on a screen)<sup>192</sup> should be specified in ems or percentages, not in points, picas, centimeters, inches, or pixels.<sup>193</sup>

<sup>190</sup> [Checkpoint 4.3 \[priority 3\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “Identify the primary natural language of a document.”

<sup>191</sup> [Checkpoint 4.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “Clearly identify changes in the natural language of a document's text and any text equivalents (e.g., captions).”

<sup>192</sup> In particular, this best practice is not intended to apply to style sheets where the value of the “media” property is “print”. Use of points, picas, centimeters, or inches in that type of style sheet is appropriate.

- (2) To eliminate any default margins that a browser may place around the edges of a Web page, rather than using

```
<body leftmargin="0" marginwidth="0" topmargin="0"
marginheight="0">
```

use the following style sheet properties with the <body> tag:

```
margin:0;
padding:0;
```

The “marginwidth” and “marginheight” attributes are proprietary attributes for Netscape. The “leftmargin” and “topmargin” attributes are proprietary attributes for Internet Explorer. None of those four attributes are compliant with the W3C XHTML standard.<sup>194</sup> The style sheet “margin:0; padding:0;” properties, on the other hand, are W3C CSS and WCAG<sup>195</sup> compliant.

- (3) Web pages should be sufficiently scalable that a horizontal scroll bar should not be necessary at 800 x 600 screen resolution.<sup>196</sup> Completely liquid layout that is scalable to all screen resolutions is highly desirable.

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<sup>193</sup> [Checkpoint 3.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se relative rather than absolute units in markup language attribute values and style sheet property values. [Priority 2]

For example, in CSS, use 'em' or percentage lengths rather than 'pt' or 'cm', which are absolute units. If absolute units are used, validate that the rendered content is usable (refer to the [section on validation](#)).”

[Section 3 of the W3C CSS Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#), recommends these techniques:

- Use the “em” unit to set font sizes.
- Use relative length units and percentages. CSS allows you to use relative units even in absolute positioning. Thus, you may position an image to be offset by “3em” from the top of its containing element. This is a fixed distance, but is relative to the current font size, so it scales nicely.
- Only use absolute length units when the physical characteristics of the output medium are known, such as bitmap images.

<sup>194</sup> Use of proprietary attributes that are not W3C XHTML compliant also makes a Web page non-compliant with [Checkpoint 11.1 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) which provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported.”

<sup>195</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.”

<sup>196</sup> Jakob Nielsen’s [“Screen Resolution and Page Layout”](#) (July 31, 2006) recommends that Web designers: Optimize Web pages for 1024x768, but use a liquid layout that stretches well for any resolution, from 800x600 to 1280x1024.

...

- **Optimize for 1024x768**, which is currently the most widely used screen size. Of course, the general guideline is to optimize for your target audience's most common resolution, so the size will change in the future. It might even be a different size now, if, say, you're designing an intranet for a company that gives all employees big monitors.
- **Do not design solely for a specific monitor size** because screen sizes vary among users. Window size variability is even greater, since users don't always maximize their browsers (especially if they have large screens).

- (4) Offices should be encouraged to fill at least two-thirds of each Web page with substantive material.<sup>197</sup>

**Legal citations** *see U.S. Code*

**<legend> tags** *see Alignment*

**Legislative Material** *see also Committee assignments and Caucus memberships; Dates and Time #2); and Issues and Voting Information*

- (1) Offices should be encouraged to include links to:

- [Legislation sponsored by the Member](#)<sup>198</sup>
- [Current House Floor Proceedings](#)<sup>199</sup>
- [Weekly House Program](#)<sup>200</sup>

- 
- **Use a liquid layout** that stretches to the current user's window size (that is, avoid frozen layouts that are always the same size).

Currently, about **60%** of all monitors are set at **1024x768** pixels. . . . In comparison, only about **17%** use **800x600** so it's obviously less important to aim at perfection for these small-display users. What's equally obvious, however, is that you can't simply ignore 17% of your customer segment by providing a frozen layout that requires more screen space than they have available.

When I say "optimize" I mean that your page should **look and work the best at the most common size**. It should still look *good* and work *well* at other sizes, which is why I recommend a liquid layout. But it should be its best at 1024x768.

The three main criteria in optimizing a page layout for a certain screen size are:

- **Initial visibility:** Is all key information visible above the fold so users can see it without scrolling? This is a tradeoff between how many items are shown vs. how much detail is displayed for each item.
- **Readability:** How easy is it to read the text in various columns, given their allocated width?
- **Aesthetics:** How good does your page look when the elements are at the proper size and location for this screen size? Do all the elements line up correctly -- that is, are captions immediately next to the photos, etc.?

<sup>197</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 64\)](#) recommends that "At least two-thirds of every page on your site should contain useful information."

<sup>198</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 59\)](#) indicates that providing information on legislation sponsored and co-sponsored by the Member is one of the elements of a well-formed House Member's Web site. At the time the report was compiled, 68.3% of House Web sites contained sponsorship and co-sponsorship information.

<sup>199</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 17\)](#) indicates that providing the current Floor proceedings is one of the elements of a well-formed congressional Web site. At the time the report was compiled, only 21% of all House Member, committee, and leadership Web sites included this information.

Since the Current House Floor Proceedings Web site is maintained by the Clerk of the House, be mindful of the [January 30, 2006 edition of the Congressional Management Foundation's Congress Online newsletter](#) which notes that "A lot of House sites have outdated or incorrect links. The most frustrating ones [include] . . . dead links to the Clerk's Web site. . . . Web sites continually change, so it's important to periodically review any link that goes off your site, especially at the beginning of each Congress so you don't have visitors looking at old information."

- [Annual House calendar](#) (available as a server-side include)<sup>201</sup>
- Majority and/or Minority Whip materials:<sup>202</sup>
  - [Majority Leader's Daily Leader report](#)
  - [Majority Leader's Weekly Leader report](#) -
  - [Majority Whip's daily WhipLine](#)

<sup>200</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 17\)](#) indicates that providing the chamber schedule is one of the elements of a well-formed congressional Web site. At the time the report was compiled, 42.7% of all House Member, committee, and leadership Web sites included this information.

<sup>201</sup> Web sites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server are encouraged put the annual House calendar on their site by using the server-side include:

```
<!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Calendar_content.htm"-->
```

All other sites can use code along the lines of:

```
<iframe src="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Calendar_content.htm"
scrolling="auto" width="660" height="3025" frameborder="0" title="Annual House
Calendar"><ul><li><a
href="http://www.house.gov/house/House_Calendar.shtml">Annual House
calendar</a></li></ul></iframe>
```

**Note:** when using the <include> on a page that can be accessed with a virtual URL, be sure to test the page with the virtual URL.

Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the House's annual calendar page. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's Web site. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with [Checkpoint 13.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) which provides that an accessible Web site should "Use navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

[Section 4 of the W3C Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) further provides that:

A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.

Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:

1. navigation bars
2. the primary content of a page

...

A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 63\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites should:

**Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn's* Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

<sup>202</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(pages 45 to 46\)](#) praises Rep. Mike Honda's Web site for having links to legislative schedules. [Rep. Honda's "Legislation: On the Issues" page](#) links to the Majority Whip's calendar, the current House floor proceedings, and the Democratic Whip's daily notice..



- [Majority Whip's House calendar](#)
  - [Republican Whip's daily Whipping Post](#)
  - [Republican Whip's weekly Whip Notice](#)
  - [Republican Whip's calendar](#)
  - [Legislation: bills and resolutions](#)<sup>203</sup>
  - [Congressional Record](#)<sup>204</sup>
  - [Committee reports](#)
  - [Committee hearings](#)<sup>205</sup>
  - [How Our Laws Are Made](#)<sup>206</sup>
  - [House Rules and Precedents](#)<sup>207</sup>
- (2) Offices should be encouraged to have a description of how legislation becomes law.<sup>208</sup> If the office does not have its own text for this, they should be encouraged to use the text from the [House's "Legislative Process" page](#).<sup>209</sup>

<sup>203</sup> Referring to "Legislation: bills and resolutions" instead of just referring to "Thomas" is consistent with the recommendation of the Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 61\)](#) which notes that "Congressional jargon and the legislative process can be difficult for most people off the Hill to understand. Focus on making the information on your site understandable, rather than impressive and official-sounding."

<sup>204</sup> Consider also providing a link to the House Rules Committee's "[Using the Congressional Record](#)."

<sup>205</sup> Consider also including the list of [today's hearings](#) compiled by the House Radio-Television Correspondents' Gallery.

<sup>206</sup> Consider also including the [kids' version of "How Our Laws Are Made"](#) (compiled by the Clerk of the House).

<sup>207</sup> Additional links related to the Rules and Precedents of the House that you might want to consider including are:

- [General Parliamentary Procedure](#) (compiled by the House Rules Committee),
- [House Committee Procedures](#) (compiled by the House Rules Committee),
- [House Floor Procedures](#) (compiled by the House Rules Committee),
- [House and Senate parliamentary procedure](#) (prepared by the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress),

<sup>208</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 58\)](#) notes that:

Most citizens outside the Beltway have forgotten their high school civics classes. Offices can do constituents a great service by finding ways of making educational information easily accessible throughout the site so visitors can refer to it whenever they have questions.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 48\)](#) further notes that:

Some offices provide educational information on their kids' or students' pages, but kids are not the only ones who need it. Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-PA) has a prominent section on his home page that explains how government works. His site includes an actual [case study](#) of how his "GEAR UP" initiative became public law. Your site should also include information about how the committee process works; explanations of legislative and congressional terms; and general descriptions of what a Member, Chair, or Leader does on a given day.

An example can also be found on Rep. Bud Cramer's "[How a Bill Becomes Law](#)" page..

<sup>209</sup> Web sites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server are encouraged to use the server-side include:

```
<!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Tying_it_all_content.htm" -->
```

All other sites can use code along the lines of:

```
<iframe src="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Tying_it_all_content.htm"
scrolling="auto" width="660" height="3025" frameborder="0"><ul><li><a
href="http://www.house.gov/house/Tying_it_all.shtml">Tying it all
Together</a></li></ul></iframe>
```



- (3) Links to legislation, legislation sponsored by the Member, the Congressional Record, committee reports, and the [annual House schedule](#), should include links from the current year.<sup>210</sup>
- (4) References to specific bills (either by name or by number) should be linked either to information on the Web site explaining the bill or to the appropriate page in the Library of Congress Thomas System.<sup>211</sup> Links **should not** be to Web pages in the Library of Congress' Legislative Information System (LIS)<sup>212</sup> because it is only accessible to congressional offices.

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**Note:** when using the <include> on a page that can be accessed with a virtual URL, be sure to test the page with the virtual URL.

Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the House's "Legislative Process page". Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's Web site. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with [Checkpoint 13.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) which provides that an accessible Web site should "Use navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

[Section 4 of the W3C Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) further provides that:

A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.

Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:

1. navigation bars
2. the primary content of a page

...

A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 63\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites should:

**Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn's* Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

<sup>210</sup> The [January 30, 2006 edition of the Congressional Management Foundation's Congress Online newsletter](#) notes that "A lot of House sites have outdated or incorrect links. The most frustrating ones were those linking [during the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress] to bills, sponsorships, and co-sponsorships from the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress (and, occasionally, earlier Congresses); dead links to the Clerk's Web site; THOMAS search engines that search the wrong Congress; and those linking to INS (it changed to USCIS in 2003!). Web sites continually change, so it's important to periodically review any link that goes off your site, especially at the beginning of each Congress so you don't have visitors looking at old information."

<sup>211</sup> Instructions for linking to specific legislation within Thomas can be found at [http://www.congress.gov/help/THOMAS\\_links/links.html](http://www.congress.gov/help/THOMAS_links/links.html) and <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/example.html>.

<sup>212</sup> Domain CONGRESS.GOV.

**Library of Congress products** *see Congressional Research Service products; Legislative material # (4); and Veterans # (2)*

**Linking** *see also Biographies # (1); Business with the Federal Government; Committee Assignments and Caucus memberships; District Information # (2); Forms # (1)(c); Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance; Graphics # (2); Issues and Voting Information # 0; Legislative Material; Lists # (3); Maps # (2); <meta> tags and <link> tags; Multimedia files and Audio files; Navigation; PDF files; Privacy Policy; Student Financial Aid; Tools for Validating Web Sites # (5); U.S. Code; Visiting Washington; and WIDA*

- (1) Any hypertext link to a Web page that is not part of either HOUSE.GOV or LOC.GOV needs to have an exit message indicating that you are leaving the House of Representatives and that neither the office nor the House is responsible for the content of the site being linked to.<sup>213</sup> Instructions for adding such a message are available at [http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht\\_exit\\_msg.htm](http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht_exit_msg.htm).
- (2) Rather than linking to other sites, offices should be encouraged to provide material within their own Web site.<sup>214</sup>
- (3) Except where they point to an <iframe>, “target” attributes should not be used in <a> tags unless there is a substantial reason to have them.<sup>215</sup>
- (4) Avoid having pages that are primarily links or that have “links” as part of the name of the page. Rather than “links”, make the emphasis “information” or “resources” or a similar description. Where possible, include a sentence or short paragraph explaining each link (or each group of links).<sup>216</sup>
- (5) Do not use “link to,” “click here,” or similar phrases in the text of links.<sup>217</sup>

<sup>213</sup> The [Members’ Congressional Handbook \(Web Sites\)](#), § 5), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

An almost identical regulation appears in the [Committees’ Congressional Handbook \(Web Site Regulations, General\)](#), § 5). Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at [http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht\\_exit\\_msg.htm](http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht_exit_msg.htm)

<sup>214</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation’s [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 24\)](#) praises the Web site of Rep. Kay Granger because of the site’s “efforts to address constituent concerns and problems online rather than pushing them off to another Web site or directing them off line.”

<sup>215</sup> [Checkpoint 10.1 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that “[u]ntil user agents allow users to turn off spawned windows, do not cause pop-ups or other windows to appear and do not change the current window without informing the user.” The [homepage of the Immigration Reform Caucus](#) is an example of proper use of the “target” attribute to control the contents of an <iframe>.

<sup>216</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation’s 1999 report *Building Web Sites Constituents Will Use* (page 9) recommends that Congressional Web sites “**Place external and internal links throughout your site, rather than on a single “Links” page.** This ensures that visitors can instantly access the information they want, rather than searching for it among a long list of links.”

<sup>217</sup> [Guideline 9 of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides accessible Web sites should: Design for device-independence.

- (6) The text of each link should provide enough information that a person who has only the text of the link can have a good idea what information the link will link to. If it is not practical to provide that information in the link, then the information should be contained in a “title” attribute of the link’s <a href> tag.<sup>218</sup>
- (7) When linking to the next file in a series of files designed to be viewed in a particular order (e.g., in a photo gallery slide show), use “rel” and “rev” attributes in the <a href> tag. The “rel” attribute specifies the relationship between the current page and the page (or internal anchor) being linked to. The values most frequently used<sup>219</sup> with the <a href> tag, are “next” and “prev” – next is used with a link to the next document in the series, and “prev” is used to link to the previous document in the series.<sup>220</sup> A special case is the first document in a series: this gets the value “start”.<sup>221, 222</sup> The “rev” attribute functions the same way as the

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**Use features that enable activation of page elements via a variety of input devices.**

[Device-independent](#) access means that the user may interact with the user agent or document with a preferred input (or output) device -- mouse, keyboard, voice, head wand, or other. If, for example, a form control can only be activated with a mouse or other pointing device, someone who is using the page without sight, with voice input, or with a keyboard or who is using some other non-pointing input device will not be able to use the form.

Roger Hudson’s [“Text Alternatives for Images”](#) (September 2003) recommends that Web designers “Avoid unnecessary terms. Don’t use words like ‘link’ or ‘click here’ for images that are links. Screen readers will indicate if something is a link or not.”

<sup>218</sup> [Checkpoint 13.1 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should:

Clearly identify the target of each link. [Priority 2]

[Link text](#) should be meaningful enough to make sense when read out of context -- either on its own or as part of a sequence of links. Link text should also be terse.

For example, in HTML, write “Information about version 4.3” instead of “click here”. In addition to clear link text, content developers may further clarify the target of a link with an informative link title (e.g., in HTML, the “title” attribute).

Note that the Jaws screen reader can be configured so that it will read which ever is larger – the text of the link or the value of the “title” attribute.

An alternative technique to using the “title” attribute, that has been suggested is to put the additional information within <span> tags and give the tag a class (e.g. class=“hidden”), where the class places the text off screen and minimizes the size (e.g., position:absolute;left:-999em; font-size:1%).

A technique to avoid at the current time is adding the additional text to the link in a <span> with a class value that has a media=“screen” style sheet with a display:none property and a media=“aural” style sheet without the display:none property. The Jaws screen reader (which currently has about 75% of the screen reader market) uses the screen style sheet (and not the aral style sheet) to build its audio output.

<sup>219</sup> For a complete list of the standard values for the “rel” and “rev” attributes, see [§ 6.12 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#).

<sup>220</sup> For example:

```
<a href="another_filename.htm" rel="next">Next</a> |
<a href="filename.htm" rel="prev">Previous</a>
```

<sup>221</sup> For instance

```
<a href="filename.htm" rel="start">Previous</a>
```

<sup>222</sup> Even though [§ 6.12 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) includes a “start” value, it does not include an “end” value. An early draft document within W3C’s Internet Engineering Task Force recommended that “end” (or “last”) be valid values for “rel” and “rev”. That proposal, however, was not adopted. (For the complete text of the proposal, including other suggested values for “rel” and “rev,” see <http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/draft-ietf-html-relrev-00.txt>.)

- “rel” attribute, except it specifies the relationship from the file being linked to the file being linked from (rather than the other way around).<sup>223</sup>
- (8) The color of links should be set by style sheets<sup>224</sup> and not by the “alink,” “link,” or “vlink” attributes of the <body> tag.<sup>225</sup>
  - (9) The colors used for hypertext links should be consistent throughout the site.<sup>226</sup>
  - (10) If an <a> tag has a “name” attribute, it should also have an “id” attribute with the same value.<sup>227</sup>
  - (11) When linking to a Web page that has a primary language<sup>228</sup> that is different from the primary language of the current page, include an “hreflang” attribute<sup>229</sup> in the <a href> tag that created the link.<sup>230</sup>

<sup>223</sup> Examples:

**Linking from the first document in the series:**

```
<a href="filename.htm" rel="next" rev="start">Next</a>
```

**Linking from the second document in the series:**

```
<a href="filename.htm" rel="start" rev="next" >Previous</a> |  
<a href="another_filename.htm" rel="next" rev="prev">Next</a>
```

**Linking from any other document in the series:**

```
<a href="filename.htm" rel="prev" rev="next" >Previous</a> |  
<a href="another_filename.htm" rel="next" rev="prev">Next</a>
```

<sup>224</sup> Use the “a:active {color: \_\_\_\_\_}” style sheets property.

<sup>225</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 7.5.1 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “alink,” “link,” and “vlink” attributes of the <body> tag as a deprecated attribute).

To set the color of an active link, use the “a:active {color;}” style sheet property. To set the color of unvisited links, use the “a:link {color;}” style sheet property. To set the color of visited links, use the “a:visited {color;}” style sheet property. There are important usability issues that come into play when setting the colors of links – see e.g., Jakob Nielsen’s [“Guidelines for Visualizing Links”](#) (May 10, 2004) for recommendations on specifying colors for visited and unvisited links. Also consider [checkpoint 13.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#), which provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner.”

<sup>226</sup> [Checkpoint 13.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should “[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner.”

The Congressional Management Foundation’s [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 61\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites should:

**Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don’t force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn*’s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

<sup>227</sup> [Section 12.2.3 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specifications](#) provides that “The [id](#) and [name](#) attributes share the same name space. . . . When both attributes are used on a single element, their values must be identical.”

[Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#), however, provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 4.10 of the W3C XHTML 1.0 Specification](#) designates the “name” attribute of the <a> tag as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>228</sup> The primary language of a page is the language specified by the “lang” and “xml:lang” attributes of the <html> tag.

<sup>229</sup> The value of the “hreflang” attribute should conform to the [RFC 4646](#) standard. Instructions for using that standard are set out in Appendix 5: *Language Identification Codes* of this document.

**<listing> tags** *see HTML*

## Lists

- (1) In unordered lists:
  - (a) Consider using a graphic or a typographic symbol other than the default.<sup>231</sup>
  - (b) When using graphics as bullets, use <ul> and <li> tags with the Cascading Style Sheets “list-style-image” property.<sup>232</sup>
  - (c) When specifying a typographic symbol to be used as a bullet (e.g., circle (○) or square (■)), use the style sheets “list-style-type” property; and do not use the “type” attribute of the <li> or <ul> tags. Likewise, when specifying the style of the numbering in an ordered list (e.g., Arabic numerals, Roman numerals, lower case letters, or upper case letters), use the style sheets “list-style-type” property; and do not use the “type” attribute of the <li> or <ol> tags.<sup>233</sup>
- (2) The words that convey the most information should be at the beginning of each item in a list – preferably in the first two words.<sup>234</sup>
- (3) Lists of links can be boring and convey the (potentially false) impression that your Web site is not rich in content. Instead of presenting lists of links, consider

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<sup>230</sup> [Checkpoint 4.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “Clearly identify changes in the natural language of a document's text and any text equivalents (e.g., captions).”

<sup>231</sup> Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, [2006]), p.232, notes when the style sheets list-style property is used to designate a substitute for the default bullet in an unordered list and both the list-style-type and the list-style-image values are provided in the list-style property:

IE/Windows and Opera/Windows users get an extra (unintended) treat. The site displays the [list-style-type designated characters] . . . first and then fills in the . . . images. The effect looks like Flash or JavaScript animation, but is purely accidental and a result of the order in which IE and Opera for Windows load and display web page components. In other browsers, user simply see the . . . [graphic].

<sup>232</sup> [Checkpoint 3.1 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that “[w]hen an appropriate markup language exists, use markup rather than images to convey information.”

[Checkpoint 3.6 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) further provides that an accessible Web site should “[m]ark up lists and list items properly.”

<sup>233</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 10.2 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “type” attribute of the <li>, <ol>, and <ul> tags as deprecated attributes).

<sup>234</sup> Jakob Nielsen's article “[F-Shaped Pattern For Reading Web Content](#)” (April 17, 2006), based on a study of the eye movements of 232 Web site users, recommends that Web designers

**Start subheads, paragraphs, and bullet points with information-carrying words** that users will notice when scanning down the left side of your content . . . . They'll read the third word on a line much less often than the first two words.

Though Nielsen's study was based on sighted users, the technique he suggests is useful not only for sighted individuals, but also for blind individuals – since an often-used technique in Jaws and Window-Eyes is to have the browser skip from heading to heading or from list to list.



- inserting a sentence (or short paragraph) with each that explains what it is about.<sup>235</sup>
- (4) Lists should be in alphabetical order, unless there is a reason to organize them in a different manner.
  - (5) The <ul> tag should be used instead of the <dir> tag or the <menu> tag.<sup>236</sup>
  - (6) The “compact” attribute of the <li>, <ol>, and <ul> tags should not be used.<sup>237</sup>
  - (7) Ideally, the “counter-reset” property of style sheets should be used (rather than the “start” attribute of the <ol> tag or the “value” attribute of the <li> tag) to change the numbering in an ordered list.<sup>238</sup> Note, however, Internet Explorer 6.0 does not support the “counter-reset” property.<sup>239</sup>

### **Listserv and E-Newsletters** *see also Contact Information and Techniques #(2)*

- (1) Forms to subscribe to an e-newsletter should ask for either (1) just the subscriber’s e-mail address; or (2) just the name and e-mail address of the subscriber.<sup>240</sup>
- (2) Forms to subscribe to an e-newsletter should indicate (or link to a page) that indicates what potential subscribers can expect to get if they subscribe (e.g., expected frequency, size, and subjects).<sup>241</sup>

<sup>235</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation’s 1999 report *Building Web Sites Constituents Will Use* (page 9) recommends that Congressional Web sites “**Place external and internal links throughout your site, rather than on a single “Links” page.** This ensures that visitors can instantly access the information they want, rather than searching for it among a long list of links.”

<sup>236</sup> [Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 10.4 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the <dir> tag and the <menu> tag as deprecated elements).

<sup>237</sup> [Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 10.2 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “compact” attribute as a deprecated attribute).

The W3C [CSS 2 Specification, § 9.2.3](#), provided a style sheet display:compact element. The [CSS 2.1 Specification, § C.2.5](#), however, notes that display:compact has been dropped from the CSS specification.

<sup>238</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 10.2 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “start” and “value” attributes as deprecated attributes).

<sup>239</sup> A WSB analysis of www.house.gov usage for April 12 to 16, 2007, indicates that Internet Explorer 6 accounted for 50.90% of the identifiable, non-robot access to the site.

<sup>240</sup> The standard set out in [§ 1303\(b\)\(1\)\(C\) of the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998](#) (COPPA) prohibits conditioning participation in an activity though a Web site on “disclosing more personal information than is reasonably necessary to participate in such activity”.

Just as in the case of § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, Congressional offices are not statutorily required to abide by the requirements of COPPA. Just as with § 508, however, Congressional offices that do not abide by COPPA’s standards risk being embarrassed if their non-compliance is publicized.

<sup>241</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation’s [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill](#) (page 67) recommends that Congressional offices

Establish a policy concerning your e-mail updates *before* visitors sign-up, and stick to it. Create clear expectations regarding what information citizens will receive and when they will receive it. A weekly legislative update or a monthly e-mail update on health care should be exactly that. An agreed-upon policy will also establish clear guidelines for office staff responsible for the newsletter’s content and distribution.



**Load time** *see Download Time*

**<map> tags** *see Image Maps*

**Maps** *see also Image Maps; Navigation #(6); and Site Maps*

- (1) Consider including maps and directions to the Representative's district and Washington offices.<sup>242</sup>
- (2) Consider including a map of the Member's district.<sup>243</sup> Where the map shows towns, counties, and other sites, it is recommended that the references to those localities on the district map be made into links<sup>244</sup> to either those localities' Web sites<sup>245</sup> or (preferably) into links to pages on the Member's Web site that provide information about the locality and include a link to the locality's Web site.<sup>246</sup>

**Margins** *see also Alignments; Centering; and Layout*

With all block elements (<div>, <p>, etc.) consider specifying the style sheet "margin" and "padding" properties, since different browsers provide different default values for these two properties.

**<menu> tags** *see Lists #(5)*

<sup>242</sup> [Yahoo](#), [MapQuest](#), [Rand McNally](#), and [Google](#) provide the ability to automatically generate such a set of directions from any user-specified address in the United States.

<sup>243</sup> Congressional district maps are available from the U.S. Geological Survey at <http://nationalatlas.gov/printable/congress.html>. Two additional sets of congressional district maps are available from the U.S. Bureau of the Census at <http://fastfacts.census.gov/home/cws/main.html> and at [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/cd109/cd109\\_individualMaps.htm](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/cd109/cd109_individualMaps.htm).

<sup>244</sup> Client-side image maps should be used for this function where possible, instead of server-side image maps. (The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(f\)](#)) provide that "Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape." Likewise, [Checkpoint 9.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should "Provide client-side image maps instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.")

Just as with external links created by <a href> tags, external links created by using image maps require exit messages to be in compliance with the [Members' Congressional Handbook \(Web Sites\)](#), § 5, issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at

[http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht\\_exit\\_msg.htm](http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht_exit_msg.htm)

<sup>245</sup> See, e.g., [Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.'s district page](#).

<sup>246</sup> See, e.g., [Rep. Dan Boren's "Second Congressional District of Oklahoma" page](#), [Rep. Bud Cramer's "5<sup>th</sup> District of Alabama" page](#), [Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's "Nebraska's First Congressional District" page](#), and [Rep. Adam Schiff's "California's 20<sup>th</sup> Congressional District" page](#).

The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 21\)](#) praises Sen. Tom Carper's Web site for having a "map of Delaware [that] breaks down local news and resources by county, which gives constituents easy access to information relevant to where they live". [Sen. Harry Reid's homepage](#) has a map that links to the Senator's accomplishments, broken down by county.

**<meta> tags and <link> tags**

To the extent practical, each page of a House Web site should include the meta data tags set out in Appendix 4: *<meta> and Related Tags* of this document.

**Military Academy Nominations** *see Service Academy Nominations*

**Missing and Exploited Children**

Member offices should consider including a link to their state's page from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.<sup>247</sup>

**MP3 files** *see Multimedia files and Audio files*

**Multimedia files and Audio files** *see also Banners #(3); Graphics; and <object> tag #(3)*

- (1) Links to audio files and multimedia files, when practical, should indicate the size of the files and their playing time.
- (2) Any page that links to a multimedia file (or an audio file) should include a link to software that allows the file to be accessed.<sup>248</sup> Note that if the link to the software points to a non-House of Representatives Web site, an appropriate exit message needs to be given.<sup>249</sup> Multimedia players are available at:
  - Quick Time = <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/win.html>
  - Real Player = <http://www.real.com/>
  - VLC Media Player = <http://www.videolan.org/vlc/>
  - Windows Media Player = <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/Browse.aspx?displaylang=en&categoryid=4>

<sup>247</sup> Use the link

```
<a
href="http://www.house.gov/htbin/leave_site?ln_url="http://www.missingkids.com/precreate/SS.html"&ln_desc=National+Center+for+Missing+and+Exploited+Children">
```

Replace “SS” with the capitalized 2-character postal abbreviation for the state.

<sup>248</sup> Examples can be found on [Rep. John Salazar's audio clips page](#), [Rep. Kenny Marchant's site tools page](#), [Rep. Mac Thornberry's Web tools page](#), and [Rep. Heather Wilson's toolbox page](#). Each of the pages on the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress Speaker's Web site (except the homepage) have (on the left side) a toolbox image and “Important tools to visit this site” linked to a [page with links to plug-ins](#).

The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(m\)](#)) provide that “When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with [§ 1194.21\(a\)](#) through (I).”

<sup>249</sup> The [Members' Congressional Handbook \(Web Sites\)](#), § 5, issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at

[http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht\\_exit\\_msg.htm](http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht_exit_msg.htm)

- (3) Files that include audio need to provide access to a written transcript.<sup>250</sup>
- (4) Whenever possible, multimedia files that include audio should have closed captioning that coordinates a transcript of the words with the action. Where closed captioning is not available, the transcript needs to use some other technique to coordinate the words with the action in order to comply with § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.<sup>251</sup>
- (5) To provide accessibility to persons who are both blind and deaf, transcripts (accessible, for instance, through a refreshable Braille display) should be audio described, i.e., they should include a description of any actions depicted in the visuals.
- (6) When embedding a multimedia file that calls up a viewer (e.g., Windows Media Viewer for .wmv files), include instructions as to how to activate and control the viewer.<sup>252</sup>
- (7) In Member Web sites, consider including multimedia files of the Member's floor speeches.<sup>253</sup>
- (8) Avoid using auto-loading multimedia files where the user does not have advance notice that the file will load.<sup>254</sup>
- (9) Rather than using an <a href> tag to link directly to a .wmv (or similar) file directly (and thereby spawning a new window for the multimedia plug in),<sup>255</sup> use an <iframe> (or similar technique) to have the viewer play on the current page.

<sup>250</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22](#)(a)) provide that "A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content)."

[Checkpoint 1.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should:

Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content). *This includes:* . . . sounds (played with or without user interaction), stand-alone audio files, audio tracks of video, and video. **[Priority 1]**

<sup>251</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22](#)(b)) provide that "Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation." [Checkpoint 1.4 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) similarly provides that "[f]or any time-based multimedia presentation (e.g., a movie or animation), synchronize equivalent alternatives (e.g., captions or auditory descriptions of the visual track) with the presentation."

<sup>252</sup> The late Rep. Charlie Norwood's Web site included the following instructions:

Pressing the "PLAY" button or clicking on the image above will start the video. After the video has started you may start, stop, or pause the video at any time.

<sup>253</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 17\)](#) indicates that providing video clips is one of the elements of a well-formed congressional Web site. At the time the report was compiled, only 35.6% of all House Member, committee, and leadership Web sites included this material.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age, \(page 32\)](#) praises Rep. Mike Pence for giving "short daily speeches on the House floor, which his office then provides on his Web site using low-cost, low-tech equipment. These regular audio and video updates show his constituents how hard he works on a daily basis."

<sup>254</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(p. 64\)](#) counsels: "Stay away from auto-loading audio or video content—like a welcome video—on your home page."

<sup>255</sup> [Checkpoint 10.1 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that "[u]ntil *user agents* allow users to turn off spawned windows, do not cause pop-ups or other windows to appear and do not change the current window without informing the user."

For examples, see the homepages of [Rep. Ron Klein](#) and the [Immigration Reform Caucus](#).

### Name attribute

- (1) An “id” attributes should normally be used instead of an “name” attribute.<sup>256</sup> If it is necessary to use a “name” attribute, then the tag should also have an “id” attribute with the same value.<sup>257</sup>
- (2) If it is necessary to use a “name” attribute, when assigning the value of the “name” attribute use the purpose of the data that the attribute’s tag relates to, not how the data is to be portrayed – the “name” value should indicate function, not form. For instance, “hotTopics” would be an appropriate value for a “name” attribute, but “whiteOnRed” would not be an appropriate value.<sup>258</sup>

### Navigation *see also Biographies # (3); Linking; Printing; Privacy Policy # (2); and RSS*

- (1) The top banner should be a link to the homepage. The alternative of using the top banner as a skip-navigation link means that either
  - the “alt” attribute of the image does not contain the text in the image (e.g., “Congressman Jones, representing the 39<sup>th</sup> district of Delaware”); or
  - the “alt” attribute gives no indication where the link goes to.

While it is possible that the “title” attribute in the <a href> tag could be used to indicate where the link is going, having conflicting “title” and “alt” attributes may be more complicated than assistive technology browsers can meaningfully process.

Note: where background graphics constitute part of the banner, they should be part of the link to the home page.

- (2) There needs to be a mechanism to allow users of assistive technologies to skip past the navigation links.<sup>259</sup> One approach to this is placing a clear gif (with an

<sup>256</sup> [Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 4.10 of the W3C XHTML 1.0 Specification](#) designates the “name” attribute of the <form> tag as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>257</sup> [Section 12.2.3 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specifications](#) provides that “The [id](#) and [name](#) attributes share the same name space. . . . When both attributes are used on a single element, their values must be identical.”

<sup>258</sup> Section 1 of the W3C [Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that: When designing a document or series of documents, content developers should strive first to identify the desired structure for their documents before thinking about how the documents will be presented to the user. Distinguishing the structure of a document from how the content is presented offers a number of advantages, including improved accessibility, manageability, and portability.

Jeffrey Zeldman’s, *Designing With Web Standards* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, [2006]), p.180, recommends that Semantic or meta-structural names (names that explain the function performed by elements contained within) are best. You would feel pretty silly having labeled a part of your site “orangebox” when the client decides to go with blue. You would feel sillier still revising your style sheets under a deadline six months from now and trying desperately to remember whether “Gladys” was a navigational area, a sidebar, a search form, or what.

<sup>259</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(o\)](#)) provide that for a Web site to be accessible, “[a] method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.” [Checkpoint 13.6 \[priority 3\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) similarly

- “alt” attribute of “skip to main content”) before the first navigation button and making the image a hypertext link to the first piece of text after the navigation links.<sup>260</sup>
- (3) At the bottom of the main content, consider having a link that goes back to the top of the main content.<sup>261</sup>
  - (4) Labels on navigation links should be personal/friendly, e.g.,
    - “Where I Stand” (rather than “Issues”)
    - “How I Voted”
    - “How I Can Help You” (rather than “Constituent Services” or “Casework”)<sup>262</sup>
    - “My Background” (rather than “Biography”)
    - “Contact Me” (rather than “Contact” or “Send an electronic message”)
    - “Our District” or “My District” (rather than “The Second District”)
  - (5) In addition to having navigation buttons across the top or down the side, each page should have a text-only version across the bottom of the page.<sup>263, 264</sup>
  - (6) Each web site should include a site map.<sup>265</sup>
  - (7) Consider making the first primary navigation button a link to the site’s homepage<sup>266</sup>. The remaining navigation should be in alphabetical order, unless there is a reason not to do so.

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provides that accessible Web sites need to “[g]roup related links, identify the group (for user agents), and, until user agents do so, provide a way to bypass the group.”

<sup>260</sup> For alternative approaches, see:

- “[‘Skip Navigation’ Links](#),” WebAIM, Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University
- “[‘Skip Navigation Links](#),” by Jim Thacher

<sup>261</sup> For an example, see [Rep. Altmire’s](#) Web site.

<sup>262</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation’s [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 61\)](#) notes that “Congressional jargon and the legislative process can be difficult for most people off the Hill to understand. Focus on making the information on your site understandable, rather than impressive and official-sounding.”

[Rep. Ben Chadler’s Web site](#) uses “How Can We Help You?” and “Assistance with Federal Agencies”. [Rep. Spencer Bachus’ Web site](#) uses “Helping You” and “Help with Federal Agencies”.

<sup>263</sup> [Checkpoint 10.5 \[priority 3\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that “[u]ntil user agents (including assistive technologies) render adjacent links distinctly, include non-link, printable characters (surrounded by spaces) between adjacent links.” A vertical broken pipe (“|” - &#166;) is often used as a divider between such links.

<sup>264</sup> It is especially important that this suggestion be implemented on any page (including splash pages) where the only navigational links are through <input> tags or by use of scripts. Having all navigation links only through <input> tags or through scripts can create problems for users of assistive technologies and for search engine indexing spiders.

<sup>265</sup> [Checkpoint 13.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should “[p]rovide information about the general layout of a site (e.g., a site map or table of contents).”

The Congressional Management Foundation’s [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 63\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites:

**Include helpful navigational tools, such as a search function and site map.** . . . Search features and site maps – indexes to a Web site – allow visitors to find information quickly and easily. These seemingly small and trivial tools make a significant difference in the site’s usefulness for constituents looking for specific information.

<sup>266</sup> *Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 27) recommends that each page on a Web site include a “[d]irect, one-click link to the homepage”.



- (8) Use caution when assigning values to the “accesskey” attribute. (Some House Web sites use the accesskey="x" attribute in the <a href> skip-navigation tag; and the accesskey="h" attribute in the <a href> tag for the “home” navigation button). The “accesskey” attribute allows the user to activate a command by pressing the ALT key with another key; for instance, if the <a href> tag in the “home” navigation button has an accesskey="h" attribute, then when a user presses the ALT key and the “H” key, the browser will go to the site’s homepage. **Note**, however, that there is substantial disagreement among accessibility standards experts over whether the use of “accesskey” attributes is a good practice or a bad practice because of potential conflicts with ALT key combinations defined by Web browsers and screen readers.<sup>267</sup>
- (9) When the main content of a page is divided into multiple sections, consider having a jump menu near the top of the page and links to go back to the jump menu at the end of each section.

<sup>267</sup> [Checkpoint 9.5 \[priority 3\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible web sites should:

Provide keyboard shortcuts to important links (including those in [client-side image maps](#)), form controls, and groups of form controls. [Priority 3]  
For example, in HTML, specify shortcuts via the “accesskey” attribute.

To implement the W3C standard, the Government of the United Kingdom has adopted the following standards for accesskey attributes ([Illustrated Handbook for Web Management Teams, § 2.4.4](#)):

- S – Skip navigation
- 1 – Home page
- 2 – What’s new
- 3 – Site map
- 4 – Search
- 5 – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- 6 – Help
- 7 – Complaints procedure
- 8 – Terms and conditions
- 9 – Feedback form
- 0 – Access key details

The Canadian Government’s [Common Look and Feel standards best practices](#) – which largely follows the W3C standard – on the other hand, provides that:

Following the identification of a conflict between the Access keys previously recommended on the CLF [(Common Look and Feel)] Web site for site navigation on GoC [(Government of Canada)] Web sites, and the proprietary assignment of access keys being used in commercially available software, e.g. speech enabled Web browsers, the CLF Access Working Group has made the following recommendations for amendment to the CLF best practices:

1. The use of Access Keys M, 1 and 2 be eliminated, and the use of any other access keys is discouraged because there is no way of knowing which access keys conflict with any assistive technology or other applications installed and running on users’ desktops.

Additional material on use of the “accesskey” attribute can be found at:

- [“Accesskey standards,”](#) by Richard Rutter
- [“Using Accesskeys – Is it worth it?”](#) by John Foliot
- [“Accesskeys and Reserved Keystroke Combinations”](#)
- [“Using accesskey Attribute in HTML Forms and Links”](#) by Jukka Korpela.



- (10) The formatting of navigation links should be consistent throughout the site.<sup>268</sup>
- (11) JavaScripts, VBScripts, and other scripts should not be used as the exclusive way to navigate to the pages on the Web site. Such use of scripts violates accessibility standards.<sup>269</sup> Additionally, many indexing spiders (including the indexing spider used by the House search engine) are not able to follow scripted links.
- (12) Where a portion of a Web site is made up of several pages (or subportions, e.g., the “Issues” portion of a Web site which might consist of an introductory page and then separate pages for each issue), consider providing links to each of the subportions from each of the subportions.<sup>270</sup>
- (13) The navigation of a site should be designed with the goal that every page in the site is accessible from every other page in the site with no more than three clicks.<sup>271</sup>

<sup>268</sup> [Checkpoint 13.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should “[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner.”

The Congressional Management Foundation’s [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 63\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites should:

**Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site.** Don’t force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn*’s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

<sup>269</sup> [Checkpoint 6.3 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should:

Ensure that pages are usable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or not supported. If this is not possible, provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page. . . .

For example, ensure that links that trigger scripts work when scripts are turned off or not supported (e.g., do not use “javascript:” as the link target). If it is not possible to make the page usable without scripts, provide a text equivalent with the NOSCRIPT element, or use a server-side script instead of a client-side script, or provide an alternative accessible page as per [checkpoint 11.4. Refer also to guideline 1.](#)

The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(l\)](#)) also provide that “When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.”

<sup>270</sup> See, e.g., the “[Hot Issues](#)” portion of Rep. Joe Baca’s Web site.

*Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 27) recommends including “links to . . . resources that are directly relevant to the current location, but don’t flood the user with links to all site areas or to unrelated pages.”

<sup>271</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation’s [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 53\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites should:

**Follow the “three click rule.”** To the degree possible, the information architecture of your site should allow visitors to get from any one page on your site to any other page in three clicks. This is especially important for frequently accessed sections and information, and less important for supporting information and document archives.

**Newsletters** *see Listserv and E-Newsletters*

**<object> tag**<sup>272</sup> *see also Alignment; <applet> tags; Banners #(3); Centering; and <embed> tags*

- (1) The width of borders around objects should be set by style sheets,<sup>273</sup> not by the “border” attribute of the <object> tag.<sup>274</sup>
- (2) When setting a buffer between an object and surrounding text, do not use the hspace or vspace attributes of the <img> tag – instead use style-sheets.<sup>275</sup>
- (3) When using an <object> tag to display a .wmv file, include a type="video/x-ms-wmv" attribute.<sup>276</sup>

**<optgroup> tags** *see forms*

## Page Program

Member offices should be encouraged to provide information about how to apply to become a Congressional Page.<sup>277</sup>

<sup>272</sup> For an attempt at using the <object> tag so that works well across browsers, see Elizabeth Castro’s “[Bye Bye Embed](#),” A List Apart (July 11, 2006).

<sup>273</sup> Use the “border-width” style sheets property.

<sup>274</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 13.7.3 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “border” attribute of the <object> tag as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>275</sup> The “padding-left,” “padding-right,” “padding-bottom,” and “padding-top” style sheets properties provide the functionality previously provided by the “hspace” and “vspace” attributes.

[Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 13.7.2 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “hspace” and “vspace” attributes as deprecated attributes).

<sup>276</sup> Other “type” attribute values for the <object> tag include:

Extension	“type” attribute value
.asf	video/x-ms-asf
.asx	video/x-ms-asf
.nsc	video/x-ms-asf
.wax	audio/x-ms-wax
.wm	video/x-ms-wm
.wma	audio/x-ms-wma
.wmd	application/x-ms-wmd
.wmx	video/x-ms-wmx
.wmz	application/x-mx-wmz
.wvx	video/x-ms-wvx

<sup>277</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation’s January 2002 report [Congress Online: Assessing and Improving Capitol Hill Web Sites](#) (p. 32) praises [Sen. Patrick Leahy’s Web site](#) for providing detailed information on the Senate Page Program.

Other examples of Congressional sites with information on the Page Program include the Web sites of [Rep. Jason Altmire](#), [Rep. Peter DeFazio](#), [Rep. Mark Foley](#), [Rep. Mark Green](#), [Rep. Jeb Hensarling](#), [Rep. Mike Honda](#), [Rep. Frank LoBiondo](#), [Rep. John Peterson](#), [Rep. Tom Petri](#), [Rep. Ted Poe](#), [Rep. Bill Shuster](#), [Rep. Michael Turner](#), and [Rep. Diane Watson](#).

**PDF Files**

- (1) Links to PDF files, when practical, should indicate the size of the files.
- (2) Any page that links to a PDF file should include a link to software that allows the file to be displayed.<sup>278</sup> Note that if the link to the software points to a non-House of Representatives Web site, an appropriate [exit message](#) needs to be given.<sup>279</sup>
- (3) All input fields (including radio buttons and checkboxes) on a PDF should have a tooltip<sup>280</sup> explanation of what information should be provided in the field.<sup>281</sup>

**Photo Album** *see also Linking #(7)*

When setting up the layout for a photo album (or photo gallery) consider making it interactive, e.g., these models:

- [Ath Slide JavaScripted Photo Gallery](#)<sup>282, 283</sup>

<sup>278</sup> For instance, <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(m\)](#)) provide that “When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with [§ 1194.21\(a\)](#) through (l).”

<sup>279</sup> The [Members’ Congressional Handbook \(Web Sites, § 5\)](#), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at

[http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht\\_exit\\_msg.htm](http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht_exit_msg.htm)

<sup>280</sup> Tooltips for input fields in a PDF perform the same function for PDF files as “title” attributes in <input>, <select>, or <textarea> tags perform in HTML files. (Note: PDF does not have an equivalent to the HTML <label> tag.)

<sup>281</sup> [Checkpoint 12.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]ssociate labels explicitly with their controls.”

The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(n\)](#)) provide that “When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.”

The Social Security Administration’s *Guide to Accessible PDF Documents and Forms* (April 2006), page 36, recommends that the tooltips for input fields on PDFs:

- Include only enough information in the tooltip for users to know what input is expected and how to complete the field correctly,
- Indicate form inputs which are required.
- Indicate if special keystrokes are required to perform a function.
- . . . should not state the input type or state [e.g., that this is a checkbox]; this information is passed programmatically to assistive technology.

<sup>282</sup> As written, the [Ath Slide JavaScripted Photo Gallery](#) does not work when scripting is turned off – which is not compliant with regulation [36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(l\)](#) of § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.”), To make the coding compliant, add (after the </script> tag): a <noscript> tag, followed by an ordered (or unordered) list of the links and captions of the photos, followed by a </noscript> tag. For an example, see [Rep. Bill Delahunt’s “Art Discovery Contest” page](#).

- [Simple Slide Show Photo Gallery](#)
- [Hoverbox Photo Gallery](#)
- [Joshua Ink CSS Style Photo Gallery](#)
- [Leftish Photo Gallery](#)
- [Toppish Photo Gallery](#)
- [Lightbox2](#)
- [SmoothGallery](#)

**Picas** *see* *Fonts #(2); and Layout*

**Pixels** *see* *Fonts #(2); and Layout*

**<plaintext> tags** *see* *HTML*

**Points** *see* *Fonts #(2); and Layout*

**Polish language material** *see* *Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

**Political Language** *see also* *Election Campaign material*

The [Members' Congressional Handbook](#), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that "The content of a Member's Web site: 1. May not include personal, political, or campaign information."<sup>284</sup> Some offices have adopted the policy of not using words such as "elected" on their Web site.

**Portuguese language material** *see* *Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

**Postal Abbreviations** *see* *Abbreviations and Acronyms; and Forms #(5)*

**<pre> tags**

Instead of using the "width" attribute in <pre> tags, use the style sheets "width" property (with the value set in ems).<sup>285</sup>

**Presidential Greetings** *see* *Greetings*

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<sup>283</sup> The [Ath Slide JavaScripted Photo Gallery](#) allows HTML coding to be included in the photograph captions. If using this feature, only use single quotation marks to include attribute values – do not use double quotation marks. If you want to use quotation marks in the text of the caption, use the entity name, decimal representation, or hexadecimal representation instead of the actual character (e.g., use &#8220; for an open double quotation mark, or &#8221; for a double close quotation mark).

<sup>284</sup> The [Committee's Congressional Handbook \(Web Site Regulations, Content, § a\)](#), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides an identical restriction on House committee Web sites.

<sup>285</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should "[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation." Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should "[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies." ([Section 9.3.4 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the "width" attribute of the <pre> tag as a deprecated attribute).

**Press Releases** *see also Biographies #(1); Issues and Voting Information #(4); and WIDA*

- (1) Offices should be encouraged to use [WIDA](#) for putting press releases on their site.
- (2) Offices should be encouraged to have their press releases available on their Web site and to make them available in chronological order and in subject order.<sup>286</sup>

**Printing**

Consider including a print option that excludes the navigation links, the banner, and the footer.<sup>287</sup>

**Privacy Policy and Cookies** *see also Babel Fish*

- (1) Every Web site should have its own page setting out its privacy policy, i.e., how the office handles personal information that the office receives through its Web site.<sup>288</sup> A model privacy notice is set out in Appendix 6 of this document.
- (2) Ideally, there should be a link to the office's privacy policy on every page of the Web site. At a minimum, the link should be in a clear and prominent place on the homepage and next to each form that requests personal information.<sup>289</sup>

<sup>286</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) that "Most of our award-winning sites keep their press releases up-to-date and organized chronologically and by topic as well." The report indicates ([page 17](#)) that only 29.1% of all House Member, committee, and leadership Web sites included this press releases in subject order.

<sup>287</sup> Appendix 1: *Print Option* of this document provides sample instructions for coding such a feature.

**Note:** The coding in the appendix depends on the use of JavaScript. The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(l\)](#)) provide that "When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology." To fully comply with § 1194.22(l), equivalent functionality should be provided when scripting is turned off. In the case of a print option that excludes navigation links, etc., this can be done through the judicious use of print style sheets. For suggestions as to how to set up such a style sheet, see Eric Meyer's "[CSS Design: Going to Print](#)", published in *A List Apart*, May 10, 2002.

The style sheet approach is best done in addition to (not instead of) the JavaScript out of respect for the spirit of the section of the § 508 regulations ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(d\)](#)) and [Checkpoint 6.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) which both provide that documents are to be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.

<sup>288</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 67) provides that "Privacy statements should be included on every Web site, but currently only 55.49% of congressional offices provide them. They should be written in user-friendly language that is designed to put visitors at ease about the information the site is collecting. If a Web site requires the user's name and address before they can correspond with the office, the privacy statement should explain why the information is being collected and what will happen to it later. It is especially important to describe the steps that the office will take to safeguard any personal information it obtains."

The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 51) goes on to say that, "A good example to follow is that of *Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)*. She posts an extensive privacy policy and her Web site is P3P-enabled. This means that when users visit her site, their browsers will automatically check her policy against their preferences."

<sup>289</sup> The regulations issued pursuant to COPPA (the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act), set out at [16 C.F.R. § 312.4\(b\)\(1\)](#), provide that:

- (1) *Placement of the notice.* (i) The link to the [Web site's privacy policy] notice must be clearly labeled as a notice of the website[s] . . . information practices . . .
- (ii) The link to the notice must be placed in a clear and prominent place and manner on the



- (3) Offices should be encouraged not to use cookies unless there is a “compelling need”.<sup>290</sup> If an office does use cookies, the office should be strongly encouraged to provide notice of this in their privacy policy.
- (4) Links to a Web site’s privacy policy are **not** required to include a `rel="privacy"` attribute in the `<a href>` tag.<sup>291</sup>

**Pseudo-classes** *see Style Sheets #*(4)

**Punjabi language material** *see Government Resources #*(2); *Language of Text: and Linking #*(11)

**Quotations** *see also Apostrophes and Quotation Marks*

Instead of using three periods to indicate an ellipsis (i.e., “. . .”), use the Unicode-compliant representation for an ellipsis: `&#x2026;`

### Reuse of Content

When an HTML page uses identical content in several places, consider using server-side includes, rather than Dreamweaver templates or libraries, or FrontPage Themes. Use of Dreamweaver templates or libraries (or use of FrontPage themes) requires that the entire site be loaded on to a local device in order to update content that is to be distributed throughout the site. With server-side includes, it is only necessary to have the one file being altered loaded on a local device.

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home page of the website . . .

(iii) The link to the notice must be placed in a clear and prominent place and manner at each area on the website . . . where [users of the website] . . . directly provide, or are asked to provide, personal information, and in close proximity to the requests for information in such area.

The Federal Trade Commission’s Federal Register statement issuing the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Rule ([64 Fed. Reg. 59894](#)) explains that:

“Clear and prominent” means that the link must stand out and be noticeable to the site’s visitors through the use, for example, of a larger font size in a different color on a contrasting background. The Commission does not consider “clear and prominent” a link that is in small print at the bottom of the home page, or a link that is indistinguishable from a number of other, adjacent links.

<sup>290</sup> There is a wide-spread misconception that Federal government offices are prohibited by law from using cookies (see, e.g., “White House Web Site Uses Forbidden Cookies Too,” Associated Press, December 30, 2005, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,180177,00.html>). The regulations issued by the Office of Management and Budget pursuant to § 208 of the E-Government Act of 2002 ([OMB Memorandum M-03-22](#), § III(D)(2)(a)(v)) permits the use of session cookies. It also permits the head of an agency to authorize the use of persistent cookies in that agency’s Web site if the agency head declares there is a “compelling need” to use the technology and the site’s privacy policy makes it clear what information is being collected, the purpose and use of the information, who will the information be disclosed to, and what will be done to safeguard the information. Nonetheless, given the public perception that it is illegal for government sites to use cookies, avoiding cookies may save a House office from embarrassment (see also “Hands in the cookie jar,” by Declan McCullagh, CNET News.com, January 6, 2006, [http://news.com.com/Infographic+Caught+with+hands+in+the+cookie+jar/2009-1028\\_3-6020368.html](http://news.com.com/Infographic+Caught+with+hands+in+the+cookie+jar/2009-1028_3-6020368.html)).

<sup>291</sup> To be compliant with [§ 6.12 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#), Web pages that use the `rel="privacy"` attribute either in an `<a>` tag or in a `<link>` tag, should have the following attribute in the `<head>` tag:

`profile="http://lists.w3.org/Archives/Public/www-html/1997Sep/0046.html"`

## RSS

- (1) Offices using WIDA should be encouraged to make use of [WIDA's RSS capability](#).
- (2) If a Web site is using RSS, it is recommended that the site include a "What is RSS" page.<sup>292</sup> CAO-Web Solutions Branch-maintained "What is RSS" text can automatically be inserted using a server-side include or by using an iframe.<sup>293</sup> The "What is RSS" link should follow the links to the actual documents.

<sup>292</sup> Examples of "What is RSS" pages can be found at the Web sites of [Rep. Kapture](#), [Rep. Maloney](#), the [House Administration Committee](#), and the [W3C Web Accessibility Initiative](#).

<sup>293</sup> Web sites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server are encouraged to use the server-side include:

```
<!--#include virtual="/include_content/rss.html" -->
```

All other sites can use code along the lines of:

```
<iframe src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/rss.html" frameborder="0" scrolling="auto"
width="660" height="550" title="What is Real Simple Syndication?" ><ul><li><a
href="http://www.house.gov/include_content/rss.html">What is Real Simple
Syndication?</a></li></ul></iframe>
```

**Note:** when using the <include> on a page that is accessible using a virtual URL, be sure to test the page with the virtual URL.

Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the House's "What is RSS" page. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's Web site. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with [Checkpoint 13.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) which provides that an accessible Web site should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

[Section 4 of the W3C Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) further provides that:

A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.

Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:

1. navigation bars
2. the primary content of a page

...  
A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill](#) (page 63) recommends that Congressional Web sites should:

**Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site.** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. If you have a blue navigation toolbar on the left side of one page, there should be a blue navigation toolbar on the left side of every page. If you have links imbedded in text in one issue section, you should do the same thing in every issue section. *Rep. Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD)* uses the same horizontal and vertical navigation throughout his site. The only thing that changes on his pages is the content.

- (3) The homepage of any Web site with RSS feeds (and any pages that lead to documents that are the subject of RSS feeds) should prominently include an icon (that links to the RSS.xml page) in one of the following formats:

- (a)  <sup>294</sup>  
 (b)  <sup>295</sup>  
 (c)  <sup>296</sup>  
 (d)  <sup>297</sup>

- (4) Each page that is part of a Web site that has RSS feeds should include (between the <head> and </head> tags), for each RSS feed, a <link rel="alternate" type="application/rss+xml"> tag with a "title" attribute that describes the feed and an "href" attribute that has the URL for the RSS XML file, e.g., <link rel="alternate" type="application/rss+xml" title="Headline news [RSS]" href="http://www.house.gov/name/rss/news.xml" />. <sup>298</sup>

**Russian language material** *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

**Samoan language material** *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

**Schedule of Member** *see also Contact Information and Techniques #(4)*

Offices should be encouraged to provide highlights of the Member's upcoming schedule on their Web site. <sup>299, 300</sup>

<sup>294</sup> The [RSS Advisory Board recommends](#) using this icon.

<sup>295</sup> `<span style="border:1px solid;border-color:#FC9 #630 #330 #F96;padding:0 3px;font:bold 12px verdana,sans-serif;color:#FFF;background:#F60;text-decoration:none;margin:0;">RSS</span>`

<sup>296</sup> `<span style="border:1px solid;border-color:#FC9 #630 #330 #F96;padding:0 3px;font:bold 12px verdana,sans-serif;color:#FFF;background:#F60;text-decoration:none;margin:0;">RSS 2.0</span>`

<sup>297</sup> `<span style="border:1px solid;border-color:#FC9 #630 #330 #F96;padding:0 3px;font:bold 12px verdana,sans-serif;color:#FFF;background:#F60;text-decoration:none;margin:0;">XML</span>`

<sup>298</sup> Pages with this tag, when viewed in Firefox, will show a special "live bookmark" icon in the URL area. Pages with this tag when viewed in Internet Explorer 7 will make the RSS icon active. The icon in both browsers becomes a drop-down list of available feeds that you can do with as desired.

<sup>299</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(pages 60 and 67\)](#) notes that

Congressional Web sites can demonstrate accountability by providing voting records, rationales for key votes, and schedules – and they can do so without overburdening their staffs. Constituents are probably not interested in knowing about every meeting that takes place or every vote taken. Stick to the most relevant and current information: meetings with constituents, public Member appearances in the district or state, committee hearings, the House and Senate floor schedule . . .

Most citizens do not understand, or are not familiar with, the intricacies of the congressional schedule. In our research with constituents, they assumed that their elected officials were golfing or on vacation when Congress is in recess. While there isn't much legislative activity to report during recesses, you can correct this misperception by posting a schedule of town hall meetings, reorganizing your home page content, or providing a preview of what the Member, committee, Leader, or Congress will be doing after the break. Every August we see scores of congressional Web sites that haven't been updated since mid-July. Don't let yours be one of them.

The report (on [page 57](#)) notes that only "9.1% of Member sites had a district or state schedule and only 7.3% had such information posted within the last month".

**Screen resolution** *see Layout #(3)*

**Scripts** *see also Forms #(6) and Navigation #(11)*

- (1) Wherever there is a script that conveys information, the <script> tag should be between the <body> tag and the </body> tag, and the </script> tag needs<sup>301</sup> to be followed by:
  - (a) <noscript>
  - (b) information that will appear to constituents who are using browsers that do not support scripts (this information should be the equivalent of what constituents using browsers supporting scripts would have received – it should be the information (or a link to it) and not merely a description of the information)<sup>302</sup>.

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<sup>300</sup> [Rep. Cynthia McKinney's Web site](#) used WIDA to provide her schedule.

<sup>301</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22](#)(a) and (l)) provide that "A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content). . . . When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology."

[Checkpoint 1.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should:

Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content). *This includes:* images, graphical representations of text (including symbols), image map regions, animations (e.g., animated GIFs), applets and programmatic objects, ascii art, frames, scripts, images used as list bullets, spacers, graphical buttons, sounds (played with or without user interaction), stand-alone audio files, audio tracks of video, and video. . . .

For example, in HTML:

- Use "alt" for the IMG, INPUT, and APPLET elements, or provide a text equivalent in the content of the OBJECT and APPLET elements.
- For complex content (e.g., a chart) where the "alt" text does not provide a complete text equivalent, provide an additional description using, for example, "longdesc" with IMG or FRAME, a link inside an OBJECT element, or a [description link](#).
- For image maps, either use the "alt" attribute with AREA, or use the MAP element with A elements (and other text) as content.

[Checkpoint 6.3 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should:

Ensure that pages are usable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or not supported. If this is not possible, provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page. . . .

For example, ensure that links that trigger scripts work when scripts are turned off or not supported (e.g., do not use "javascript:" as the link target). If it is not possible to make the page usable without scripts, provide a text equivalent with the NOSCRIPT element, or use a server-side script instead of a client-side script, or provide an alternative accessible page as per

[checkpoint 11.4. Refer also to guideline 1.](#)

<sup>302</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22](#)(l)) provide that When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.

Similarly, [Checkpoint 6.3 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should:

(c) `</noscript>`

- (2) Every `<script>` tag should have a “type” attribute. Valid “type” attributes for `<script>` tags include, `type="text/javascript"` and `type="text/vbscript"`. The “type” attribute performs the function that was previously performed by the “language” attribute – the “language” attribute should not be used in `<script>` tags.<sup>303</sup>

## Searching

- (1) Offices should be encouraged to include a [Web site search capability](#) on all pages, in or near the top banner.<sup>304</sup>
- (2) Member Web sites that have a virtual URL should have the virtual URL on <http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.shtml> - as that page provides the list of URL that are spidered for the HIR search engine.
- (3) The `<isindex>` tag should not be used to create search boxes or for any other purpose.<sup>305</sup> The `<form>` tag (along with `<input>`, `<textarea>`, and related tags) should be used to create search boxes.

`<select>` tags *see Forms*

## Service Academy Nominations

Member offices should be encouraged to provide information about how to apply to apply for a nomination to a service academy.<sup>306</sup>

**Site maps** *see Navigation #(6)*

Ensure that pages are usable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or not supported. If this is not possible, provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page.

<sup>303</sup> [Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 18.2.1 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “language” attribute of the `<script>` tag as a deprecated attribute).

The “language” attribute should not be confused with the “lang” attribute that specifies the human language of associated text (e.g., `<span lang="fr">oui</span>`) or the “hreflang” attribute that specifies the primary language of a page being linked to, e.g.,

`<a href="http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/index.asp?Language=F" hreflang="fr-CA">Parliament of Canada</a>`

<sup>304</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation’s [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 63\)](#) recommends that each Congressional Web site include a search capability, noting that “While they are common practice off the Hill, only 50.2% of House sites and 69.0% of Senate sites have functional search engines.”

*Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 27) recommends that a search capability be provided in the upper right corner of each page.

<sup>305</sup> [Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies.” ([Section 17.8 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) and [§ C.6 of the W3C XHTML 1.0 Specification](#) designate the `<isindex>` tag as a deprecated element).

<sup>306</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation’s [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 46\)](#) recommends that “Visitors to Member sites should . . . be able to initiate basic service requests . . . and to solicit assistance with academy nominations and internship processes.”



**Skip-navigation links** *see Navigation #(1), (2), and (8)*

### **Social Security numbers**

Offices should be strongly urged not to request that users of their Web site send Social Security numbers by Web form or e-mail.<sup>307</sup> Where an office needs to have a Social Security number (e.g., for a Privacy Act release form), consider using a form that will generate a document to be postal mailed (or faxed) to the office by the person filling out the form – see, e.g., [Rep. Neil Abercrombie’s casework authorization form](#).

**Spanish language material** *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance; Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

### **Strike-through text**

Either style sheets<sup>308</sup> or <del> tags, should be used to label struck-through text. The <s> tag or <strike> tag should not be used for this or any other purpose.<sup>309</sup>

### **Student Financial Aid**

Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with students, or with people who finance students)<sup>310</sup>, that are hosted on an HIR Web server should be encouraged to include the [CRS-maintained “Financial Aid for Students” page](#) in their Web site. Offices not hosted on an HIR Web server should be encouraged to iframe the page.<sup>311</sup>

<sup>307</sup> Item 21 of [The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Checklist](#), HISPUB 007.1.56, April 2007 (page 4), provides that “All web forms must include direction for public users to not pass any sensitive data via the web”.

<sup>308</sup> Use the “text-decoration: line-through” style sheets property.

<sup>309</sup> [Checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies ([Section 15.2.1 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the <s> and <strike> tags as deprecated elements).

<sup>310</sup> The [Congressional Management Foundation’s Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(p. 46\)](#) notes that “Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs* Web site provides information on veterans’ benefits for its key audience.”

<sup>311</sup> Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the generic “Student Financial Aid” page. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office’s Web site. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with [Checkpoint 13.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) which provides that an accessible Web site should “[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner.”

[Section 4 of the W3C Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) further provides that:

A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.

Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:

1. navigation bars
2. the primary content of a page
- ...

**Style Sheets** *see also Aural Style Sheets; Browser Compatibility; Centering; Fonts; Graphics # (4); Headings; Layout; Lists # (1); Tables # (3); Tools for Validating Web Sites # (2); and Underlining*

- (1) Web sites need to be readable with style sheets turned off in order to comply with § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.<sup>312</sup>
- (2) When using style sheets to create one or more columns of text, be sure to have padding between the left and right edges of the text and whatever is adjacent to the text.
- (3) Be cautious when using @import to call up a style sheet, as Jaws (in default mode, prior to version 8) does not read style sheets delivered through @import.<sup>313</sup>
- (4) When pseudo-classes are used in a style sheet, they should be in the order: link, visited, hover, active.<sup>314</sup> There is currently not agreement when precisely where the focus pseudo-class should be placed with respect to link, visited, hover, and active.<sup>315</sup>
- (5) When assigning the name of a class, use the purpose of the data that will be in the class, not how the data is to be portrayed – the class name should indicate function, not form. For instance, “hotTopics” would be an appropriate class name, but “whiteOnRed” would not be an appropriate class name.<sup>316</sup>

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A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 63\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites should:

**Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn's* Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

<sup>312</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(d\)](#)) provide that “Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.” A virtually identical standard is set out in [Checkpoint 6.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#).

<sup>313</sup> For more information on how Jaws interacts with style sheets, see “[Does JAWS support cascading style sheets \(CSS\)?](#)” Freedom Scientific (February 1, 2007).

<sup>314</sup> For a technical explanation of why this is needed, based on priorities within CSS, see Eric Meyer's explanation at <http://meyerweb.com/eric/css/link-specificity.html>.

<sup>315</sup> For more information on this issue, see <http://www.webmasterworld.com/forum83/9334.htm>.

<sup>316</sup> Section 1 of the W3C [Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that:

When designing a document or series of documents, content developers should strive first to identify the desired structure for their documents before thinking about how the documents will be presented to the user. Distinguishing the structure of a document from how the content is presented offers a number of advantages, including improved accessibility, manageability, and portability.

Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, [2006]), p.180, recommends that Semantic or meta-structural names (names that explain the function performed by elements contained within) are best. You would feel pretty silly having labeled a part of your site

**Subcommittees** *see Committee Assignments and Caucus memberships*

**Support Office Web sites** *see “About” page*

**Tables** *see also Alignment; and Layout*

- (1) Row and column headings in tables should use <th> tags instead of <td> tags. Additionally, the <th> tag for each row heading should have a scope="row" attribute, and the <th> tag for each column heading should have scope="col" attribute.<sup>317</sup>
- (2) In complex tables (i.e., tables with nested column or row headings and subheadings), each heading (i.e., each <th> tag) should have an “id” attribute and each cell of the table (i.e., each <td> tag) should have a “headers” attribute that associates the cell with the appropriate headers.<sup>318</sup>
- (3) Style sheets should be used for layout, rather than using <table border="0"> tags.<sup>319</sup>

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“orangebox” when the client decides to go with blue. You would feel sillier still revising your style sheets under a deadline six months from now and trying desperately to remember whether “Gladys” was a navigational area, a sidebar, a search form, or what.

<sup>317</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(g\)](#)) provide that “Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables”. A virtually identical standard is set out in [Checkpoint 5.1 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#).

<sup>318</sup> The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22\(h\)](#)) provide that Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.

A virtually identical standard is set out in [Checkpoint 5.2 \[priority 1\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#).

<sup>319</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.”

One approach to replacing layout tables with stylesheets is to use <div> tags with “class” attributes to invoke stylesheets such as:

```
.nav {float: left; width: 32%;}
.maincontent {float: left; width: 32%; margin-left: 1%; margin-right: 1%;}
.supnav {float: right; width: 32%;}
```

In the example (for a 3-column layout), text in the “nav” class will appear in the left column, text in the “maincontent” class will appear in the middle column, and text in the “supnav” class will appear in the right column.

**Note:** The total width is deliberately slightly less than 100% in order to make the layout compatible with various browsers that do not properly implement the CSS box model. This approach is suggested in Jeffrey Zeldman’s, *Designing With Web Standards* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, [2006]), p. 297.

**Additional Note:** Many of the Gecko-based browsers (including Firefox and Netscape 7) are unable to print more than one page of floated text. A solution to this bug suggested by Eric Meyer is basically to set up a print style sheet with “float:none”. (See Eric Meyer’s “[CSS Design: Going to Print](#),” published in A List Apart, May 10, 2002.)

For a strategy (and code) for setting up a 3-column layout with fixed-width columns on the left and right, a liquid center, and a full-screen width footer, see Matthew Levine’s “[In Search of the Holy Grail](#),” A List Apart (January 30, 2006). **Note,** however, that the strategy in Levine’s article does not work in Internet Explorer 5.5 – a WSB analysis of www.house.gov usage for April 12 to 16, 2007, indicates that IE 5 constitutes 6.85% of the identifiable, non-robot access to the site. Additionally, Levine’s approach uses the IE “star hack”, which is [no longer supported by IE starting with IE 7](#) (which constituted 25.34% of [www.house.gov](#) usage).

- (4) Heights and widths within a table should be set with the style sheet “height” and “width” properties, not with the “height” and “width” attributes of the tags.<sup>320</sup>
- (5) Rather than using the “nowrap” attribute to disable automatic wrapping of text in table cells, use the style sheets property “white-space:nowrap”.<sup>321</sup>
- (6) When using tables, consider including a sort feature.<sup>322</sup>

**Tagalog language material** *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

**<textarea> tags** *see Forms*

**Thai language material** *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

**Titles** *see also Headings; Graphics #(5); Tables #(1)*

- (1) The content of <title> tags should be unique for each page on the site, if practical.
- (2) The words that convey the most information should be at the beginning of each title – preferably in the first two words.<sup>323</sup>

### Tools for Validating Web Sites

In addition to [InFocus](#), consider using the following free tools:

- (1) [W3C Markup Validation Service](#) – will check for compliance with the W3C HTML and XHTML standards.<sup>324</sup>

<sup>320</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies ([Section 11.2.6 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “height” and “width” attributes of the <td> and <th> tags as deprecated attributes).

<sup>321</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies ([Section 11.2.6 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) designates the “nowrap” attribute as a deprecated attribute).

<sup>322</sup> Instructions for implementing a sort function in a Web table can be found at Neil Crosby’s “[Standardista Table Sorting \(A client-side JavaScript Table Sort\)](#).” An implementation of the sort function can be found at the [homepage of the Immigration Reform Caucus](#).

<sup>323</sup> [Checkpoint 13.8 \[priority 3\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[p]lace distinguishing information at the beginning of headings, paragraphs, lists, etc.”

Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger in their *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 276) note that:

The main page title is especially important because it serves as the link to the page in search engine listings. Users speed through those listings, so your page title must convey your purpose in just a few words. Our eye-tracking studies show that users often read only the first words of the search listings, so it’s no good to save your information carrying keywords for the end of the title.

<sup>324</sup> [Checkpoint 3.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should “validate to published formal grammars.”

- (2) [W3C CSS Validator](#) – will check for compliance with the W3C Cascading Style Sheets standards (will only work on files that are compliant with at least one of the W3C<sup>325</sup> HTML or XHTML standards).<sup>326</sup>
- (3) [Vischeck](#) – will simulate how images look to people with different types of colorblindness (a version of Vischeck is available in InFocus).
- (4) [Cynthia Says](#) – checks for 508 compliance and for compliance with the W3C WCAG 1.0 standard. This is a good supplement to InFocus, because Cynthia Says catches some accessibility problems that InFocus does not.<sup>327</sup>
- (5) [WebXACT](#) – checks for compliance with the 508 regulations, W3C’s WCAG 1.0 and P3P standards; broken links; download speeds, and cookies.

**Tours** *see Forms; and Visiting Washington*

**Typeface** *see Fonts*

**Ukrainian language material** *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(11)*

### Unclaimed Property

On Member Web sites, consider including material concerning the Member’s state’s unclaimed property office. The National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators maintains a page that links to the offices of each state and territory at [http://www.unclaimed.org/RightFrame.asp?VisitorType=owner&SectionName=find\\_property](http://www.unclaimed.org/RightFrame.asp?VisitorType=owner&SectionName=find_property).

### Underlining

- (1) Style sheets<sup>328</sup>, not <u> tags, should be used to achieve underlining.<sup>329</sup>
- (2) Do not use underlining for emphasis in normal text.<sup>330</sup> Text to be emphasized should be preceded by an <em> tag and followed by a </em> tag; and style sheets should be used to specify font weight, font size, and color.<sup>331</sup>

<sup>325</sup> Other W3C validators are available at <http://www.w3.org/QA/Tools/#validators>.

<sup>326</sup> [Checkpoint 3.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should “validate to published formal grammars.”

<sup>327</sup> One option that Cynthia Says provides is to perform an analysis of the quality of “alt” attributes. The standards used by Cynthia Says to analyze “alt” attributes are set out at <http://www.hisoftware.com/cc/altquality.htm>. Cynthia Says also detects some deprecated attributes (e.g., “bgcolor” and “nowrap”) as part of its WCAG priority 2 analysis.

<sup>328</sup> Use the “text-decoration: underline” style sheets property.

<sup>329</sup> [Checkpoint 3.3 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[u]se style sheets to control layout and presentation.” Additionally, [checkpoint 11.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “[a]void deprecated features of W3C technologies ([Section A.3.1 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#)) designates the <u> tag as a deprecated element).

<sup>330</sup> Jakob Nielsen, in “[Guidelines for Visualizing Links](#)” (May 10, 2004) recommends:

Don’t underline any text that’s not a link, even if your links aren’t underlined. **Reserve underlining for links.** Because underlines provide a strong perceived affordance of clickability, users will be confused and disappointed if underlined text doesn’t have an actual affordance to match this perception.



**U.S. Code**<sup>332</sup>

- (1) Whenever a section of the U.S. Code is referred to on a Web page, it is recommended that the reference link to the full text of the section.
- (2) URLs for individual sections of the U.S. Code should normally be in the format  
<http://uscode.house.gov/quicksearch/get.plx?title=TT&section=SS>  
 where **TT** is replaced with the title number<sup>333</sup> and **SS** is replaced with the section number<sup>334</sup>. For example, the URL for the Privacy Act (which is title 5, section 552a of the U.S. Code) would be  
<http://uscode.house.gov/quicksearch/get.plx?title=5&section=552a>
- (3) When a U.S. Code citation is given in legal citation style (e.g., 5 U.S.C. § 552a), a “title” attribute should be included in the <a href> tag that links to the full text of the section – expanding the citation shorthand into text, e.g.,  

```
<a
href="http://uscode.house.gov/quicksearch/get.plx?title=5&section=552a
" title="title 5, section 552a of the United States Code">5 U.S.C. &#167;
552a</a>
```

 (Note, that “&#167;” will display as a section symbol, i.e., “§”.)

**Urchin** *see Usage Statistics***Usage Statistics**

Offices hosted on any of the HIR Web servers should be urged to examine their site’s usage statistics through [Urchin](#).

**Validation Tools** *see Tools for Validating Web Sites***VBScript** *see Scripts***Veterans**

- (1) Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with veterans)<sup>335</sup> should be encouraged to include a page(s) on their Web site devoted to veterans’

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<sup>331</sup> One potentially legitimate exception to this standard (and even then, one to be used with care) is when you are reproducing text that originally existed as non-World Wide Web printed text. As Paul Ford notes in “[Processing Processing](#)” (September 2, 2003) (cited in Jeffrey Zeldman’s, *Designing With Web Standards* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, [2006], p. 175):

When I’m publishing content from 1901 and it’s in italics, it’s in *italics*, not emphasized.  
 Typography has a semantics that is subtle, changing, and deeply informed by history.

<sup>332</sup> The U.S. Code is the official, subject-matter order, compilation of the Federal statutes (currently in force), of a general and permanent nature, The U.S. Code is compiled by the Office of the Law Revision Counsel of the U.S. House of Representatives. For more information, see <http://uscode.house.gov/about/info.shtml>.

<sup>333</sup> U.S. Code title numbers run from 1 to 50. For a list of the subjects covered by each of the 50 titles, see <http://uscode.house.gov/download/ascii.shtml>.

<sup>334</sup> U.S. Code section numbers can include numerals, lower case letters, upper case letters, and up to one dash, e.g., “123456aaa-2b”. For these purposes, section numbers do not include material in parentheses, e.g., “(c)(3)” in “501(c)(3)” – in this instance the “(c)(3)” indicates that this is subsection “(c)(3)” of section 501.

benefits.<sup>336</sup> The text of a CAO-Web Solutions Branch-maintained FAQ that links to appropriate pages on the Web sites of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Archives and Records Administration can automatically be inserted using a server-side include or by using an iframe.<sup>337</sup>

<sup>335</sup> The [Congressional Management Foundation's Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(p. 46\)](#) notes that "Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans' Affairs* Web site provides information on veterans' benefits for its key audience."

<sup>336</sup> The [Congressional Management Foundation's Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(p. 42\)](#) sites the [veterans section of Rep. Mike Honda's Web site](#) as a good example of using a Web site to build relations with veterans.

<sup>337</sup> Web sites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server are encouraged to use the server-side include along the lines of:

```
<ul><!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Veterans_content.htm" --></ul>
```

All other sites can use code along the lines of:

```
<ul><iframe src="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Veterans_content.htm"
frameborder="0" scrolling="auto" width="660" height="230" title="Veterans benefits frequently
asked questions" ><li><a
href="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Veterans_content.htm">Veterans benefits
frequently asked questions</a></li></iframe></ul>
```

**Note:** when using the <include> on a page that is accessible using a virtual URL, be sure to test the page with the virtual URL.

Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to [http://www.house.gov/house/subpage\\_content/Veterans\\_content.htm](http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Veterans_content.htm). Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's Web site. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with [Checkpoint 13.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) which provides that an accessible Web site should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

[Section 4 of the W3C Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) further provides that:

A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.

Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:

1. navigation bars
2. the primary content of a page

...

A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 63\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites should:

**Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn's* Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

- (2) The Library of Congress' Veterans History Project<sup>338</sup> is attempting to collect and preserve stories of wartime service of veterans of

- World War I (1914-1920),
- World War II (1939-1946),
- Korean War (1950-1955),
- Vietnam War (1961-1975),
- Persian Gulf War (1990-1995), and
- Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts (2001-present).

Consider, on Member Web sites (and on the Web sites of other House offices that deal regularly with veterans)<sup>339</sup>, including either a link to the Project<sup>340</sup> or providing a form on the Member's Web site that constituents can use to participate in the Project (see, e.g., the "Fifth District War Heroes Project" portion of the ["Veterans" page on Rep. Steve King's Web site](#)).

- (3) On Member Web sites (and on the Web sites of other House offices that deal regularly with veterans)<sup>341</sup>, consider including a link to the Department of Veterans Affairs' National Gravesite Locator.<sup>342</sup>

**Vietnamese language material** see *Government Resources* #(2); *Language of Text*: and *Linking* #(11)

### Visiting Washington

- (1) Member offices should be encouraged to include a form<sup>343</sup> on their Web site for constituents to request tours of the U.S. Capitol building and other Washington, DC landmarks and attractions.<sup>344</sup>
- (2) Rather than linking to the CAO-Web Solutions Branch-maintained ["Washington, DC – Tourist Information"](#) page and/or the CAO-Web Solutions Branch-maintained ["Visiting DC"](#) page, offices should be encouraged to place the text of

<sup>338</sup> Created by [Pub. L. 106-380](#).

<sup>339</sup> The [Congressional Management Foundation's Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(p. 46\)](#) notes that "Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans' Affairs* Web site provides information on veterans' benefits for its key audience."

<sup>340</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/vets/>

<sup>341</sup> The [Congressional Management Foundation's Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(p. 46\)](#) notes that "Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans' Affairs* Web site provides information on veterans' benefits for its key audience."

<sup>342</sup> [http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL\\_v1](http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1)

<sup>343</sup> Instructions for using CAO-Web Solutions Branch's form\_proc software to create tour request forms are available on HouseNet at [http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht\\_tour\\_form.htm](http://housenet.house.gov/webassistance/html/ht_tour_form.htm).

Form\_proc is the software suggested in Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age, \(p. 57\)](#): "House offices can also simplify their e-mail management by utilizing the customized Web-based forms available from House Information Resources (i.e. for tour requests, scheduling requests, casework, feedback, etc.)."

<sup>344</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age \(page 46\)](#) recommends that "[v]isitors to Member sites should also be able to initiate basic service requests – for flags, tours, photos, and documents, for example . . ."

either or both those pages into a page on their own Web site (by using a server-side include or an iframe).<sup>345</sup>

- (3) Links to external sites for this portion of a Web site should normally go to the external sites' tour (or visitor) page, rather than to their home page (e.g., go to

<sup>345</sup> To capture the text of the Tourist Information page, Web sites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server can use the server-side include:

```
<!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Tour_dc_content.htm" -->
```

All other sites can use code along the lines of:

```
<iframe src="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Tour_dc_content.htm"
scrolling="auto" width="660" height="390" title="Washington DC tourist
information"><ul><li><a href="http://www.house.gov/house/tour_dc.shtml">Washington, DC
tourist information</a></li></ul></iframe>
```

To capture the text of the Visiting DC page, Web sites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server can use the server-side include:

```
<!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Visitor_content.htm" -->
```

All other sites can use code along the lines of:

```
<iframe src="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Visitor_content.htm "
scrolling="auto" width="660" height="390" title="Visiting Washington DC"><ul><li><a
href="http://www.house.gov/house/Visitor.shtml">Visiting Washington,,
DC</a></li></ul></iframe>
```

**Note:** when using the <include> on a page that is accessible using a virtual URL, be sure to test the page with the virtual URL.

Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the House's "Washington DC Tourist Information" or "Visiting Washington, DC" pages. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's Web site. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with [Checkpoint 13.4 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) which provides that an accessible Web site should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

[Section 4 of the W3C Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) further provides that:

A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.

Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:

1. navigation bars
2. the primary content of a page

...

A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 63\)](#) recommends that Congressional Web sites should:

**Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn's* Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

<http://www.supremecourtus.gov/visiting/visiting.html>, rather than to <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>).

**Voice** *see Multimedia files and Audio files; and Word Choice*

**Voting Information** *see Issues and Voting Information*

## **Waste**

Offices may want to consider including a page on what they are doing to combat waste. See, e.g., Rep. Tom Feeney's "Washington Waste Watchers" page.

**Web Designer** *see Commercial References*

**Welcome Messages** *see Homepage*

**WIDA** *see also Blogs; Events Schedule; Floor Statements; Issues and Voting Information # (2); Press Releases; and Schedule of Member*

- (1) Because WIDA-generated pages (including index pages) reside in a different directory than the rest of the Web site, it is important to verify that any relative links (including relative graphic links) still work, once site is on the production Web server.
- (2) Where you have a link with a date range, be sure the documents linked to really conform to the date range.
- (3) Offices using WIDA should be encouraged to use the WIDA "issues" feature to
  - (a) generate a WIDA list page that is in issue order;<sup>346</sup> and
  - (b) place a [WIDAinc](#) on each of the pages in the "issues" section of their Web site that deal with the issues broken out by WIDA issue category.
- (4) When using a WIDAinc with the "More" option, make use of the "Template" option and include in the template: `<a href="{HTMLFILE_LINK}" title="{TITLE}">`.<sup>347</sup>
- (5) Use server-side includes to provide navigation within WIDA-generated documents. With that technique, future changes in the Web site's file names will not require republishing all of the WIDA documents in order to keep the navigation functioning properly.

<sup>346</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 60\)](#) notes that "Most of our award-winning sites keep their press releases up-to-date and organized chronologically and by topic as well." The report ([page 17](#)) also notes that, at the time it was compiled, only 28.1% of House Member, committee, and leadership Web sites provided press releases organized by topic.

<sup>347</sup> [Checkpoint 13.1 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should:

Clearly identify the target of each link. [Priority 2]

[Link text](#) should be meaningful enough to make sense when read out of context -- either on its own or as part of a sequence of links. Link text should also be terse.

For example, in HTML, write "Information about version 4.3" instead of "click here". In addition to clear link text, content developers may further clarify the target of a link with an informative link title (e.g., in HTML, the "title" attribute).



- (6) When displaying WIDA index information, consider setting the information up in table form, with sort functionality. See, e.g., the [“News” page of the Immigration Reform Caucus](#).

**Word Choice**

Use a consistent voice throughout a Web site. For instance – unless there is an important reason to do otherwise – do not refer the Member as “I” in the biography, but as “Rep. Jones” in the rest of the Web site.<sup>348</sup>

**Write Your Representative** *see Contact Information and Techniques #(1)*

**<xmp> tags** *see HTML*

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<sup>348</sup> [Checkpoint 14.3 \[priority 3\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should “[c]reate a style of presentation that is consistent across pages”.

## Appendix 1: Print Option

One way to provide the user of a web site with the option of printing without navigation bars or banners is to implement the following:

(1) Between the <head> and </head> tags, insert:

```
<script type="text/javascript" >
var gAutoPrint = false; // Flag for whether or not to automatically call the print
function
function printSpecial()
{
if (document.getElementById != null)
{
var html = '<html>\n<head>\n';
if (document.getElementsByTagName != null)
{
var headTags = document.getElementsByTagName("head");
if (headTags.length > 0)
html += headTags[0].innerHTML;
}

html += "\n</he' + 'ad>\n<body>\n';

var printReadyElem = document.getElementById("printReady");

if (printReadyElem != null)
{
html += printReadyElem.innerHTML;
}
else
{
alert("Could not find the printReady section in the HTML");
return;
}

html += "\n</BO' + 'DY>\n</HT' + 'ML>';

var printWin = window.open("", "printSpecial");
printWin.document.open();
printWin.document.write(html);
printWin.document.close();
if (gAutoPrint)
printWin.print();
}
```

```
else
{
alert("Sorry, the print ready feature is only available in modern browsers.");
}
}
</script>
```

- (2) If you want the print dialog box to be automatically called, replace

```
var gAutoPrint = false
```

with

```
var gAutoPrint = true
```

- (3) Precede the material that you would like to be printed with:

```
<table id="printReady" border="0">
```

- (4) Follow the material you would like to be printed with: `</table>`

- (5) Precede the image or text that you would like to be the link to the feature with:

```
<a href="javascript:void(printSpecial())">
```

- (6) After the image or text that you would like to be the link to the feature with, add:

```
</a>
```

## Appendix 2: Federal Judicial Branch

Most House Member Web sites include a page on contacting Federal agencies. Many of these include some of the Federal courts. One way to personalize those pages is to include links to the specific U.S. Court of Appeal, U.S. District Court, and U.S. Bankruptcy Court that have jurisdiction within the Member's congressional district.

### U.S. Courts of Appeals

The United States is divided into 12 judicial circuits: The 1<sup>st</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> circuits and the District of Columbia circuit. Each of the 12 circuits has a U.S. Court of Appeals. These courts are generally referred to as the:

U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1<sup>st</sup> Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit

.

.

.

U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Which circuit a particular congressional district is in depends on what state (or territory) the congressional district is in. The map at

<http://www.uscourts.gov/images/CircuitMap.pdf>

shows which circuit each U.S. state and territory is in.

The U.S. Courts of Appeals have a uniform naming convention for their URLs:

[http://www.ca\[CIRCUIT\].uscourts.gov/](http://www.ca[CIRCUIT].uscourts.gov/)

so that the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1<sup>st</sup> Circuit is at <http://www.ca1.uscourts.gov/>; the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit is <http://www.ca2.uscourts.gov/>; etc.

### U.S. District Courts and U.S. Bankruptcy Courts

The United States is divided into approximately 100 judicial districts. Every state and territory contains at least one U.S. judicial district. Some states contain several judicial districts. Each judicial district has one U.S. District Court and one U.S. Bankruptcy Court. Some examples of U.S. District Courts are:

U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska

U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California

U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia

Some examples of U.S. Bankruptcy Courts are:

U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Alaska

U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of California

U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Virginia

Which judicial district a particular congressional district is in depends on what county (and state) the congressional district is in. Once you know all of the counties that are entirely or partially in a Member's congressional district, go to

<http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/lookup.html>

and enter the state and county information. The system will supply you with the name of the judicial district for that county (as well as confirming the judicial circuit for the state). Some congressional districts include parts of more than one judicial district, so it is important to test all of the counties from the congressional district.

The U.S. District Courts have a uniform naming convention for their URLs:

[<http://www.\[STATE POSTAL ABBREVIATION\]\[ONE LETTER CODE INDICATING PART OF THE STATE\]d.uscourts.gov/>](http://www.[STATE POSTAL ABBREVIATION][ONE LETTER CODE INDICATING PART OF THE STATE]d.uscourts.gov/)

so the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska is <http://www.akd.uscourts.gov/>; the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of California is <http://www.cand.uscourts.gov/>; the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia is <http://www.vaed.uscourts.gov/>; etc.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Courts have a similar naming convention for their URLs:

[<http://www.\[STATE POSTAL ABBREVIATION\]\[ONE LETTER CODE INDICATING PART OF THE STATE\]b.uscourts.gov/>](http://www.[STATE POSTAL ABBREVIATION][ONE LETTER CODE INDICATING PART OF THE STATE]b.uscourts.gov/)

so the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Alaska is <http://www.akb.uscourts.gov/>; the U.S. Bankruptcy Court of the Northern District of California is <http://www.canb.uscourts.gov/>; the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Virginia is <http://www.vaeb.uscourts.gov/>; etc.

### Other Federal courts

There are several courts of national jurisdiction (and judicial branch offices) that you may also want to include in Member Web sites:

- U.S. Tax Court, <http://www.ustaxcourt.gov/>
- U.S. Court of Federal Claims, <http://www.uscfc.uscourts.gov/>
- U.S. Court of International Trade, <http://www.cit.uscourts.gov/>
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, <http://www.fedcir.gov/>
- U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, <http://www.vetapp.gov/>
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, <http://www.armfor.uscourts.gov/>
- U.S. Supreme Court, <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>

### Other Federal Judicial Agencies

- Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, <http://www.uscourts.gov/>
- Federal Judicial Center, <http://www.fjc.gov/>



- U.S. Sentencing Commission, <http://www.ussc.gov/>

Additionally, there is a very good tutorial on the Federal court system (compiled by the Federal Judicial Center) at <http://www.fjc.gov/federal/courts.nsf>.

## Appendix 3: Caucus Web Sites

### Web sites of those caucuses listed at

[http://cha.house.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=39](http://cha.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=39)  
that have Web sites:

- 21st Century Health Care Caucus -  
<http://www.patrickkennedy.house.gov/index.asp?Type=NONE&SEC=%7BE19E1409-D06A-4492-A5E7-6DC029BF8C11%7D>
- 9/11 Commission Caucus -  
[http://maloney.house.gov/index.php?option=com\\_issues&task=view\\_issue&issue=2&Itemid=35](http://maloney.house.gov/index.php?option=com_issues&task=view_issue&issue=2&Itemid=35)
- Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus -  
<http://www.house.gov/ramstad/caucus/Addiction/AddictionINTRO.htm>
- Alzheimer's Disease Congressional Task Force -  
[http://markey.house.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=blogcategory&id=236&Itemid=66](http://markey.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=236&Itemid=66)
- Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus -  
<http://www.house.gov/ramstad/caucus/Disbility/disadv.htm>
- Blue Dog Coalition - <http://www.house.gov/ross/BlueDogs/bluedogs.shtml>
- California Democratic Congressional Delegation -  
<http://www.house.gov/lofgren/cdcd/index.shtml>
- Coalition for Autism Research and Education -  
<http://www.house.gov/doyle/autism.shtml>
- Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus -  
<http://honda.house.gov/capac/>
- Congressional Automotive Caucus -  
[http://www.house.gov/kildee/auto\\_caucus.shtml](http://www.house.gov/kildee/auto_caucus.shtml)
- Congressional Bike Caucus -  
<http://blumenauer.house.gov/Issues/CaucusSummary.aspx?NewsID=995>
- Congressional Black Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/kilpatrick/cbc/index.htm>
- Congressional Brain Injury Task Force -  
<http://www.pascarell.house.gov/display2.cfm?id=1270>
- Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues -  
<http://www.house.gov/pallone/armeniancaucus.html>
- Congressional Caucus on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders -  
<http://www.house.gov/ramstad/caucus/FetalAlc/FASD.htm>
- Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues -  
[http://maloney.house.gov/index.php?option=com\\_issues&task=view\\_issue&issue=12&Itemid=35](http://maloney.house.gov/index.php?option=com_issues&task=view_issue&issue=12&Itemid=35)
- Congressional Caucus on Sri Lanka and Sri Lankan Americans -  
<http://www.house.gov/pallone/srilankancaucus.html>
- Congressional Caucus on the Judicial Branch -  
<http://schiff.house.gov/judicialcaucus/>
- Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine -  
<http://www.house.gov/larsen/meth/>

- Congressional China Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/forbes/AboutRandy/chinacaucus.htm>
- Congressional Climate Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/olver/climatechange/index.html>
- Congressional Coastal Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/pallone/coastalcaucs.html>
- Congressional Croatian Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/radanovich/CroatianCaucus/>
- Congressional Diabetes Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/degette/diabetes/index.html>
- Congressional E-911 Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/shimkus/911home.htm>
- Congressional Entertainment Industries Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/watson/cec/>
- Congressional Food Safety Caucus-<sup>349</sup>
- Congressional Gulf of Mexico Caucus - <http://harris.house.gov/Communities/GulfCaucus.htm>
- Congressional Hispanic Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/baca/chc/>
- Congressional Human Rights Caucus - <http://lantos.house.gov/HoR/CA12/Human+Rights+Caucus/Home.htm>
- Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/bilbray/irc/>
- Congressional International Anti-Piracy Caucus - <http://schiff.house.gov/antipiracycaucus/>
- Congressional Internet Caucus (Advisory Committee) - <http://www.netcaucus.org/>
- Congressional Kidney Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/mcdermott/kidneycaucus/>
- Congressional Labor and Working Families Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/lindasanchez/laborcaucus/index.shtml>
- Congressional Native American Caucus - [http://www.house.gov/kildee/native\\_american\\_ca.shtml](http://www.house.gov/kildee/native_american_ca.shtml)
- Congressional Prayer Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/forbes/prayercaucus.htm>
- Congressional Progressive Caucus <http://cpc.lee.house.gov/>
- Congressional Rural Caucus <http://www.house.gov/johnpeterson/ruralcaucus/CRC%20index.html>
- Congressional Rural Housing Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/hinojosa/crhc/>
- Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/joanndavis/shipbuildingcaucus/>
- Congressional Steel Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/english/steelcaucus.shtml>
- Congressional Task Force on International HIV/AIDS - [http://www.house.gov/mcdermott/issues\\_hiv aids.shtml](http://www.house.gov/mcdermott/issues_hiv aids.shtml)
- Congressional Victims Rights Caucus <http://poe.house.gov/vr/>

<sup>349</sup> During the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Web site of the Congressional Food Safety Caucus was hosted by Rep. Sherrod Brown. With Rep. Brown's election to the Senate in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Caucus' Web site is in the process of being hosted by [Rep. Rosa DeLauro](#).

- Congressional Vision Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/green/cvc/>
- Congressional Western Caucus - <http://chriscannon.house.gov/wc/index.htm>
- Electronic Warfare Working Group - <http://www.house.gov/pitts/ew.htm>
- Green Scissors Caucus -  
<http://blumenauer.house.gov/Issues/CaucusSummary.aspx?NewsID=910&IssueID=0>
- House Baltic Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/shimkus/baltic/baltic.shtml>
- House Rural Health Care Coalition -  
[http://www.pomeroy.house.gov/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC=%7B998F12BA-9704-463E-9F61-3EB414CBDA2C%7D](http://www.pomeroy.house.gov/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7B998F12BA-9704-463E-9F61-3EB414CBDA2C%7D)
- International Conservation Caucus -  
<http://www.royce.house.gov/internationalconservation/contact.htm>
- Kashmir Forum - <http://www.house.gov/pitts/kashmir.htm>
- Law Enforcement Caucus -  
<http://www.house.gov/stupak/lawenforcement.shtml>
- Medical Technology Caucus -  
<http://www.house.gov/ramstad/caucus/Medtech/medical03.htm>
- Modeling and Simulation Training Caucus -  
<http://www.house.gov/forbes/mascaucus.htm>
- National Guard and Reserve Components Caucus -  
<http://stevebuyer.house.gov/ReserveCaucus/ngcredir.html>
- Public Broadcasting Caucus -  
<http://blumenauer.house.gov/Issues/CaucusSummary.aspx?NewsID=986&IssueID=0>
- Republican Study Committee -  
<http://www.house.gov/hensarling/rsc/index.shtml>
- Silk Road Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/pitts/silkroad.htm>
- Victory in Iraq Caucus -  
<http://joewilson.house.gov/index.cfm?SectionID=69&ParentID=3&SectionTypeID=2&SectionTree=3,69>

#### Web sites of those caucuses not listed at

[http://cha.house.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=39](http://cha.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=39)  
that have Web sites:

- 30 Something Working Group -  
<http://www.speaker.gov/30something/index.html>
- Congressional Andean Region Caucus -  
<http://crowley.house.gov/issues/andean.htm>
- Congressional Bangladeshi Caucus -  
<http://crowley.house.gov/issues/bangladeshi.htm>
- Congressional Caucus on Ethiopia and Ethiopian-Americans -  
<http://www.honda.house.gov/ethiopiacaucus.shtml>
- Congressional Childcare Caucus -  
<http://bernie.house.gov/childcare/caucus.asp>
- Congressional Generic Drug Equity Caucus -  
<http://calvert.house.gov/genericdrug.asp>

- Congressional Manufactured Housing Caucus - <http://calvert.house.gov/manufhousing.asp>
- Congressional Privacy Caucus - [http://markey.house.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=blogcategory&id=253&Itemid=81](http://markey.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=253&Itemid=81)
- Congressional Wine Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/radanovich/wine/>
- Congressional Wireless Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/pickering/WirelessCaucus.htm>
- Democratic Women's Working Group, <http://www.speaker.gov/dwwg/index.html>
- Former State Legislative Leaders Working Group - <http://www.house.gov/larson/sll.htm>
- House Cancer Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/pryce/hccaucus.html>
- House Digital Divide Caucus - <http://www.house.gov/larson/digitaldivide/>
- Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Caucus - <http://blumenauer.house.gov/Issues/CaucusSummary.aspx?NewsID=983&IssueID=0>
- Livable Communities Task Force - <http://blumenauer.house.gov/Issues/CaucusSummary.aspx?NewsID=1077&IssueID=0>
- Results Caucus - <http://sessions.house.gov/Issues/Issue/?IssueID=1000>

## Appendix 4: <meta> and Related Tags

[Checkpoint 13.2 \[priority 2\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that an accessible Web site should “Provide metadata to add semantic information to pages and sites.” The following is a suggested list of tags for use by offices of the U.S. House of Representatives. The list is designed to get the best return for the time invested in inserting the tags into Web pages. The tags are based on the following standards:

- [Dublin Core Metadata Element Set, Version 1.1 \(revised\)](#), Dublin Core Metadata Initiative;<sup>350</sup>
- [Global Information Locator Service \(GILS\) 2.0 metadata standard](#)<sup>351</sup> ([WAGILS implementation](#));
- [Platform for Internet Content Selection](#) (PICS) standard as promulgated by the Word Wide Web Consortium and implemented by [SafeSurf](#) and the [Internet Content Rating Associaton](#);
- Australian Government Locator Service ([AGLS](#)) meta tag standard, National Archives of Australia;
- [VW96 meta tag standard](#), Vancouver Webpages (Canada); and
- [Robot meta-tag standard](#), Spidering BOF Group (1996 Distributed Indexing/Searching Workshop of the World Wide Web Consortium).

The following list is divided into two parts. The first part consists of tags that can be expected to remain consistent throughout a Web site. The second part consists of tags that may change with each Web page.

*Note:* When using these examples, replace text in **red bold italics** with text appropriate for your office's Web pages.

### Tags That Are Likely to Remain Constant Throughout a Web Site<sup>352</sup>

HTML Code	Description/Comments
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<sup>350</sup> “Dublin Core” is the official implementation of ISO Standard 15836-2003 and NISO Standard Z39.85-2001.

<sup>351</sup> GILS is the official implementation of [44 U.S.C. § 3511](#).

<sup>352</sup> Because these tags have values that are likely to remain consistent throughout the entire Web site, it is appropriate to have them contained in a server-side include, which could then be invoked on each HTML page.

The “profile” attribute of the <head> tag should **not** be used as a substitute for the server-side include. [Section 7.4.4 of the W3C HTML 4.01 Specification](#) (which defines the <head> tag “profile” attribute) reserves the profile file for definitions of the “name” attribute of each <meta> tag, rather than as a repository of the <meta> tags themselves. In the absence of a W3C standard for formatting profile files (§ 7.4.4 specifically provides that it “does not define formats for profiles”), the Global Multimedia Protocols Group has proposed that the profile files be separate (X)HTML files that use the <dl>, <dt>, and <dd> tags to define the <meta> tag “name” attributes (see the GMPG’s [XMDP: Introduction and Format Description](#)).



HTML Code	Description/Comments
<pre>&lt;link rel="schema.DC" href="http://purl.org/DC/elements/1.1/" /&gt; &lt;link rel="schema.DCTERMS" href="http://purl.org/DC/TERMS/" /&gt; &lt;link rel="schema.AGLS" href="http://www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/gov_online/agls/1.2" /&gt; &lt;link rel="schema.VW96" href="http://vancouver- webpages.com/VWbot/VW96-schema.html" /&gt;</pre>	Identifies the location of the schemas for the Dublin Core, AGLS, and VW96 meta tags.
<pre>&lt;link href="<a href="http://www.house.gov/writerep/">http://www.house.gov/writerep/</a>" rel="EDITOR" title="Feedback form" /&gt;</pre>	Replace <a href="http://www.house.gov/writerep/">http://www.house.gov/writerep/</a> with the URL of the electronic form that constituents can use to contact the office. <sup>353</sup>
<pre>&lt;meta http-equiv="Reply-To" content="<a href="mailto:john.doe@mail.house.gov">john.doe@mail.house.gov</a>" /&gt; &lt;link href="<a href="mailto:john.doe@mail.house.gov">mailto:john.doe@mail.house.gov</a>" rel="AUTHOR" title="Feedback by e-mail" /&gt; &lt;meta name="contactNetworkAddress" content="<a href="mailto:john.doe@mail.house.gov">john.doe@mail.house.gov</a>" /&gt;</pre>	Your public e-mail address. If you do not have one, delete these tags.

<sup>353</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 66\)](#) recommends that "Every congressional Web site should prominently display basic contact information, including . . . their e-mail address or a link to their contact form".

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<pre>&lt;meta http-equiv="PICS-Label" content='(PICS-1.1 "http://www.classify.org/safesurf/" 1 gen true for "http://www.house.gov/doi/" r (SS~000 1) "http://www.icra.org/ratingsv02.html" 1 gen true for "http://www.house.gov/doi/" r (cz 1 lz 1 nz 1 oz 1 vz 1) gen false for "http://www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/gov_online/agls/1.2" r (cz 1 lz 1 nz 1 oz 1 vz 1) gen false for "http://vancouver-webpages.com/vwbot/vw96-schema.html" r (cz 1 lz 1 nz 1 oz 1 vz 1) gen true for "http://purl.org/dc/" r (cz 1 lz 1 nz 1 oz 1 vz 1) "http://www.rsac.org/ratingsv01.html" 1 gen true for "http://www.house.gov/doi/" r (n 0 s 0 v 0 1 0)) gen false for "http://www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/gov_online/agls/1.2" r (n 0 s 0 v 0 1 0)) gen false for "http://vancouver-webpages.com/vwbot/vw96-schema.html" r (n 0 s 0 v 0 1 0)) gen true for "http://purl.org/dc/" r (n 0 s 0 v 0 1 0))' /&gt;</pre>	<p>Identifies your site as <b>not</b> containing: a chat room, profanity, heterosexual or homosexual themes, nudity or sexual material, violence, bigotry, promotion or glorification of drug use, other adult themes, gambling, promotion of tobacco use, promotion of alcohol use, promotion of weapon use, promotion of harm against people, material that might be perceived as setting a bad example for children, or material that might disturb young children." Replace <a href="http://www.house.gov/doi/">http://www.house.gov/doi/</a> with the name of the main URL of your Web site (on Member Web sites, this is normally either <a href="http://member's.name.house.gov">http://member's.name.house.gov</a> or <a href="http://www.house.gov/member's.name/">http://www.house.gov/member's.name/</a>).</p>
<pre>&lt;meta name="DC.subject" scheme="DCTERMS.LCSH" content="United States. Congress" /&gt;</pre>	<p>Library of Congress subject heading for the page. <b>United States. Congress</b> can be used as the LOC subject heading for any congressional Web page. For more specific Library of Congress subject headings (as well as more specific Library of Congress classification numbers and Dewy Decimal System classification numbers), see the <a href="#">Library of Congress Online Catalog</a>.</p>

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<meta name="DC.subject.classification" scheme="DCTERMS.LCC" content="JK1021" />	Library of Congress classification number <b>JK1021</b> can be used as the LOC classification number for any congressional Web page. For more specific Library of Congress classification numbers, see the <a href="#">Library of Congress Online Catalog</a> .
<meta name="DC.subject.classification" scheme="DCTERMS.DDC" content="328" />	Dewey Decimal System classification number <b>328</b> can be used as the Dewey Decimal classification number for any congressional Web page. For more specific Dewey Decimal System classification numbers, see the <a href="#">Library of Congress Online Catalog</a> .
<meta name="subjects" content="Federal Government; U.S. Representatives" />	GILS subject term for the page. <b>Federal Government; U.S. Representatives</b> can be used as the GILS subject term for any House Web page. For more specific terms, see the <a href="#">GILS Topic Trees</a> .
<meta name="AGLS.Function" scheme="AGIFT" content="Governance" />	AGLS function element for the page. <b>Governance</b> can be used as the AGLS function element for any congressional Web page. For more specific AGLS function elements, see the <a href="#">Australian Government's Interactive Functions Thesaurus</a> .
<meta name="DC.format.medium" scheme="DCTERMS.IMT" content="text/html" /> <meta name="medium" content="website" />	Use on any page with an .htm, .html, .shtm, or .shtml extension.
<meta name="DC.coverage.spatial" scheme="DCTERMS.ISO3166" content="US" /> <meta name="DC.coverage.spatial" scheme="DCTERMS.TGN" content="United States (C,V)" />	Identifies the national geographic coverage of the page as the United States.

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<link href="http://www.house.gov/ <i>doe</i> /" rel="top" title="home page of <i>John W. Doe</i> " />	Location of the homepage of your Web site.
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset= <i>UTF-8</i> " />	Identifies the character set using the standards set by the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA). Of the <a href="#">IANA sanctioned character sets</a> , the World Wide Web Consortium suggests using the Unicode UTF-8 standard. <sup>354, 355</sup> Note: selection of a character set <b>does not</b> affect the typefaces you select – it only determines which characters are valid characters.
<meta name="DC.creator" content="United States. Congress. House of Representatives. Office of <i>Representative John W. Doe</i> " /> <meta http-equiv="Owner" content=" <i>Representative John W. Doe</i> , United States House of Representatives" /> <meta name="govType" content="national" /> <meta name="originatorJurisdiction" content="United States" /> <meta name="originatorDepartment" content="Congress"> <meta name="origiatorDivision" content="House of Representatives" /> <meta name="originatorOffice" content=" <i>Representative John W. Doe</i> " /> <meta name="contactOrganization" content=" <i>Representative John W. Doe</i> " />	Your office.
<meta name="contactStreetAddress1" content=" <i>987 Cannon House Office Building</i> " /> <meta name="contactCity" content="Washington" /> <meta name="contactState" content="DC" /> <meta name="contactZipcode" content="20515" /> <meta name="contactPhoneNumber" content=" <i>(202) 224-3121</i> " /> <meta name="contactFaxNumber" content=" <i>(202) 225-0000</i> " />	Your main office address, phone number, and fax number. <sup>356</sup>

<sup>354</sup> See, e.g., Bert Bos' "[Character Encodings](#)".

Use of UTF-8 (or UTF-16) is also consistent with the avoiding the problems associated with XML declarations (see footnote 90).

<sup>355</sup> UTF-8 is the successor to the series of standards that included ISO 8859-1.

<sup>356</sup> The Congressional Management Foundation's [2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill \(page 66\)](#) recommends that "Every congressional Web site should prominently display basic contact information, including telephone and fax numbers, [and] the office's physical address".

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<meta name="DC.rights" content="United States Government work under 17 USC secs. 105, 403" />	Copyrights in congressional publications are controlled by sections <a href="#">105</a> and <a href="#">403</a> of title 17 of the United States Code.
<meta name=" DC.relation.conformsTo" content=" <b>Members'</b> Congressional Handbook (Web Sites standards), Committee on House Administration of the U.S. House of Representatives; Technical Standards for Web-based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications issued pursuant to section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, 36 CFR 1194.22; Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.0, World Wide Web Consortium (W3C); Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS) standard as promulgated by the Word Wide Web Consortium and implemented by SafeSurf and the Internet Content Rating Association; Dublin Core 1.1 (revised) meta tag standard, Dublin Core Metadata Initiative; Australian Government Locator Service (AGLS) 1.2 meta tag standard, National Archives of Australia; VW96 meta tag standard, Vancouver Webpages (Canada); Robot meta-tag standard, Spidering BOF Group (1996 Distributed Indexing/Searching Workshop of the World Wide Web Consortium); Global Information Locator Service (GILS) metadata standard (WAGILS implementation); XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition), World Wide Web Consortium; Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (15 U.S.C. chapter 91); Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule (16 C.F.R. part 312)" />	The web page that lists what standards your site conforms. House committee Web sites should conform to the <b>Committees' Congressional Handbook</b> , rather than to the <b>Members' Congressional Handbook</b> .

### Tags That May Vary With Each Page Within a Web Site

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<meta name="DC.title" content=" <b>Welcome!"</b> /> <meta name="title" content=" <b>Welcome!"</b> />	Insert the title of the page.

<pre>&lt;meta name="DC.description.abstract" content="description of page of the Honorable John W. Doe, Congressman from the __th congressional district of your state" /&gt; &lt;meta name="description" content="description of page of the Honorable John W. Doe, Congressman from the __th congressional district of your state" /&gt;</pre>	Brief description of the content (or purpose) of the page. Use the same description in both tags.
<pre>&lt;meta name="keywords" content="House of Representatives, Congress, Representative John Doe, other important words" /&gt;</pre>	List of words or phrases that may be useful to someone searching for your Web page. Use synonyms for important words that may not actually appear in the text of you Web page. <sup>357</sup>
<pre>&lt;meta name="DC.identifier" scheme="DCTERMS.URI" content="http://www.house.gov/doe/pagename.htm" /&gt;</pre>	Insert the URL of the page.
<pre>&lt;meta name="DC.date.modified" scheme="DCTERMS.WTN8601" content="2002-12-02" /&gt; &lt;meta name="dateofLastModification" content="2002-12-02" /&gt;</pre>	Date the page was last modified. Use the format yyyy-mm-dd.
<pre>&lt;meta name="DC.relation.isFormatOf" scheme="DCTERMS.URI" content="http://www.house.gov/doe/OtherPageName.htm" /&gt; &lt;link rel="alternate" type="FileType" href="http://www.house.gov/doe/OtherPageName.htm" /&gt;</pre>	If a copy of this page in a different format (e.g., a large font version, or a graphics-free version) exists, then use this tag to identify where it is. In the <link> tag, use: type="text/html" for .htm, .html, .shtm, or .shtml files, type="image/jpeg" for .jpg files, type="image/gif" for .gif files, or type="application/pdf" for .pdf files

<sup>357</sup> Only use words that are relevant to what is on the page – do not use words that are irrelevant even if you believe that doing so will attract people to your site through search engines. In addition to the ethical questions that such practices raise, also consider Jakob Nielsen's and Hoa Loranger's observation in *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (p. 18):

You might ask, "What's the harm in attracting users even if you don't have the product they want? The worst they can do is leave." But actually, they can do worse than leaving: They can never return. Once users have been disappointed several times after clicking your links in a search engine, they may well decide to ignore your site in the future.



<pre>&lt;meta name="DC.language" scheme="DCTERMS.RFC4646" content="en-US" /&gt; &lt;meta http-equiv="Content-Language" content="en-US" /&gt;</pre>	<p>Identifies the language primarily used on the page as English (United States style). If your page is in another language, replace <b>es-US</b> according to the instructions set out in Appendix 5: <i>Language Identification</i> of this document.</p>
<pre>&lt;meta name="VW96.ObjectType" content="Document" /&gt;</pre>	<p>Identifies the Web page as either being the homepage, a FAQ, or a document (all other pages). If this is your homepage, then replace <b>Document</b> with <b>Homepage</b>. If the primary function of this page is Frequently Asked Questions, then replace <b>Document</b> with <b>FAQ</b>. For additional possible values, see the <a href="#">VW96 Scheme Description</a>.</p>
<pre>&lt;meta name="DC.type" scheme="DCTERMS.DCMIType" content="Text" /&gt;</pre>	<p>Identifies that the page is primarily a non-interactive, text page. If the page is primarily an interactive form, then replace <b>Text</b> with <b>InteractiveResource</b>. If the page is primarily a graphic, replace <b>Text</b> with <b>Image</b>. For additional possible values, see the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative's <a href="#">DCMI Type Vocabulary</a>.</p>
<pre>&lt;meta name="AGLS.Audience" scheme="agls-audience" content="public" /&gt;</pre>	<p>If the intended audience for this page is kids, then replace <b>public</b> with <b>children</b>. If the intended audience for this page is students, then replace <b>public</b> with <b>students</b>. If the intended audience for this page is senior citizens, then replace <b>public</b> with <b>seniors</b>. A list of all special audiences is available in the <a href="#">AGLS Implementation Manual</a>.</p>
<pre>&lt;meta name="DC.rights.accessRights" content="public" /&gt;</pre>	<p>If the page is not to be available to the general public, replace <b>public</b> with a description of who may have access.</p>

<code>&lt;meta name="robots" content="INDEX, FOLLOW" /&gt;</code>	Allows the HIR indexing software (and other indexing software, e.g., <a href="#">Google</a> ) to make your Web page searchable and to follow any links on your page. If your page is primarily an interactive form, replace <b>FOLLOW</b> with <b>NOFOLLOW</b> .
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## Appendix 5: Language Identification Codes<sup>358</sup>

If the material is in English (as used in the United States), then the language code is:  
en-US

If the material is **not** in English (as used in the United States), then to determine the language code:

- (1) find out from the person who supplied you with the text:
  - (a) What language is the material in?
  - (b) Is the material in a version of the language that is associated with a particular country or region (e.g., Spanish as spoken in Mexico vs. Spanish as spoken throughout Latin America vs. Spanish as spoken in Spain)?
  - (c) If the material is text (as opposed to being audio), what alphabet (or script) is the material in?
- (2) Go to the IANA Language Subtag Registry at:  
<http://www.iana.org/assignments/language-subtag-registry>
- (3) In the Registry, the information for language subtags is identified as **Type:**  
**language**. For instance:
 

**Type:** language  
**Subtag:** fr  
**Description:** French  
**Added:** 2005-10-16  
**Suppress-Script:** Latn

Find the appropriate language subtag and use this as the first part of the language tag.
- (4) In the Registry, the information for alphabet subtags is identified as **Type: script**. Find the appropriate script subtag.
  - (a) If the script subtag is the same as the **Suppress-Script** value from the language subtag, then do not use the script tag. E.g., fr = French written with the Latin alphabet.
  - (b) If the script subtag is not the same as the **Suppress-Script** value from the language subtag, then add a dash and the script subtag. E.g., ja-Latn = Japanese written with the Latin alphabet.
- (5) In the Registry, the information for country or region subtags is identified as **Type: region**.

<sup>358</sup> [Checkpoint 4.3 \[priority 3\] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#) provides that accessible Web sites should “Identify the primary natural language of a document.” [Checkpoint 4.1 \[priority 1\]](#) provides that accessible Web sites should also “Clearly identify changes in the natural language of a document’s text and any text equivalents (e.g., captions).”

The standard for codes to identify individual languages is set out in [RFC 4646](#) (a simplified version is available at the W3C’s “[Language tags in HTML and XML](#)”).

- (a) If the language is normally associated with just one country (and the material is in that country's version of the language), then do not use the region subtag. E.g., ja = Japanese as used in Japan.
- (b) Otherwise, add a dash and the region subtag. E.g.,
- es-PR = Spanish as used in Puerto Rico;
  - es-419 = Spanish as used in Latin America;
  - zh-Hant-TW = Chinese as used in Taiwan, written with traditional Han script.

**Examples:**

en-US	English as used in the United States
es-PR	Spanish <sup>359</sup> as used in Puerto Rico
es-MX	Spanish as used in Mexico
es-419	Spanish as used in Latin America
ar	Arabic <sup>360</sup> (written in Arabic script) <sup>361</sup>
ar-Latn	Arabic, written in Latin script
hy	Armenian <sup>362</sup> (written in Armenian script) <sup>363</sup>
hy-Latn	Armenian written in Latin script
ch	Chamorro (as used in Guam)
zh-Hans-CN	Chinese <sup>364</sup> as used in the Peoples Republic of China, written in simplified Han script <sup>365</sup>

<sup>359</sup> Spanish is the primary language of over 10% of the population of 49 of the 53 congressional districts of California; and is the primary language of over 50% of the population of California's 29<sup>th</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, and 48<sup>th</sup> Congressional Districts, according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (pp. 137-189).

A collection of U.S. Government material in Spanish is available at  
<http://www.usa.gov/gobiernousa/index.shtml>

<sup>360</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Arabic is available at  
<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Arabic>

<sup>361</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Arabic script is set out at <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0600.pdf>; with supplemental material at <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0750.pdf>, <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UFB50.pdf>, and <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UFE70.pdf>.

<sup>362</sup> Armenian is the primary language of over 10% of the population of California's 29<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (p. 165).

A collection of U.S. Government material in Armenian is available at  
<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Armenian>

<sup>363</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Armenian script is set out at <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0530.pdf>; with supplemental material at <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0530.pdf>.

<sup>364</sup> Chinese is the primary language of over 10% of the population of California's 8<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup> Congressional Districts, according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (pp. 144, 148, and 165).

A collection of U.S. Government material in Chinese is available at  
<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Chinese>

<sup>365</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Unihan (the CJK Unified Ideographs) is set out at <http://www.unicode.org/charts/unihan.html>.

zh-Hant-TW	Chinese as used in Taiwan, written in traditional Han script
cho	Choctaw
nl	Dutch <sup>366</sup> (Flemish)
fr-US	French as used in the United States <sup>367</sup> (including Acadian)
fr-CA	French as used in Canada
de	German <sup>368</sup>
el	Greek (modern) <sup>369</sup> (written in Greek script) <sup>370</sup>
haw	Hawaiian
he	Hebrew <sup>371</sup> (written in Hebrew script) <sup>372</sup>
he-Latn	Hebrew, written in Latin script
hi	Hindi <sup>373</sup> (written in Devanagari script) <sup>374</sup>
hi-Latn	Hindi, written in Latin script
hmn-Hmng	Hmong, <sup>375</sup> written in Pahawh Hmong script <sup>376</sup>
hmn-Latn	Hmong, written in Latin script
it	Italian <sup>377</sup>
ja	Japanese <sup>378</sup> (written in Han, Hiragana, <sup>379</sup> and Katakana <sup>380</sup> script)

<sup>366</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Flemish is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Dutch>

<sup>367</sup> The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that 5.3% of households in Maine and 4.7% of households in Louisiana speak French.

A collection of U.S. Government material in French is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#French>

<sup>368</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in German is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#German>

<sup>369</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Greek is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Greek>

<sup>370</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for modern Greek script is set out at

<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0370.pdf>; with supplemental material at

<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1F00.pdf>.

<sup>371</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Hebrew is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Hebrew>

<sup>372</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Hebrew script is set out at

<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0590.pdf>; with supplemental material at

<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UFB00.pdf>.

<sup>373</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Hindi is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Hindi>

<sup>374</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Devanagari script is set out at

<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0900.pdf>.

<sup>375</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Hmong is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Hmong>

<sup>376</sup> For information on Pahawh Hmong script, see <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/hmong.htm>.

<sup>377</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Italian is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Italian>

<sup>378</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Japanese is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Japanese>

<sup>379</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Hiragana script is set out at

<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U3040.pdf>.

<sup>380</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Katakana script is set out at

<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U30A0.pdf>; with supplemental material at

<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U31F0.pdf> and <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UFF00.pdf>.

ja-Latn	Japanese, written in Latin script
ko-Hang	Korean <sup>381</sup> , as written in Hangeul script <sup>382, 383</sup>
ko-Hani	Korean, as written in Hanja script
ko-Latn	Korean, as written in Latin script
lo	Lao <sup>384</sup> (written in Lao script) <sup>385</sup>
lo-Latn	Lao, written in Latin script
nv	Navajo
fa	Persian (Farsi) <sup>386</sup> (as written in Arabic script) <sup>387</sup>
fa-Latn	Persian (Farsi), as written in Latin script
pl	Polish <sup>388</sup>
pt	Portuguese <sup>389</sup>
pt-BR	Portuguese as used in Brazil
pa	Punjabi <sup>390</sup> (written in Gurmukhi script) <sup>391</sup>
pa-Latn	Punjabi, written in Latin script
ru	Russian <sup>392</sup> (written in Cyrillic script) <sup>393</sup>
ru-Latn	Russian, written in Latin script
sm	Samoan <sup>394</sup>

<sup>381</sup> Korean is the primary language of over 5% of the population of California's 33<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District, according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (p. 169).

A collection of U.S. Government material in Korean is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Korean>

<sup>382</sup> For information on the scripts associated with Korean, see

<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/korean.htm>.

<sup>383</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Hangeul script is set out at

<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UAC00.pdf>.

<sup>384</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Lao is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Laotian>

<sup>385</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Lao script is set out at <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0E80.pdf>.

<sup>386</sup> Persian is the primary language of over 5% of the population of California's 30<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (p. 166).

A collection of U.S. Government material in Persian is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Farsi>

<sup>387</sup> For information on representing Persian text on the Web, see Behdad Esfahbad's *Persian Computing with Unicode*, April 2004. The current Unicode

<sup>388</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Polish is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Polish>

<sup>389</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Portuguese is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Portuguese>

<sup>390</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Punjabi is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Punjabi>

<sup>391</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Gurmukhi script is set out at

<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0A00.pdf>.

<sup>392</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Russian is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Russian>

<sup>393</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Cyrillic script is set out at <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0400.pdf>, with supplemental material at <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0500.pdf>.

<sup>394</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Samoan is available at

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Samoan>



tl	Tagalog <sup>395</sup> (as used in the Philippines, written in Latin script)
tl-Tglg	Tagalog (as used in the Philippines), written in Tagalog script <sup>396</sup>
th	Thai <sup>397</sup> (written in Thai script) <sup>398</sup>
th-Latn	Thai, written in Latin script
uk	Ukrainian <sup>399</sup> (written in Cyrillic script)
uk-Latn	Ukrainian, written in Latin script
vi	Vietnamese <sup>400</sup>

<sup>395</sup> Tagalog is the primary language of over 5% of the population of California's 7<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 51<sup>st</sup> Congressional Districts, according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (pp. 143, 148, 149, and 187).

A collection of U.S. Government material in Tagalog is available at  
<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Tagalog>

<sup>396</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Tagalog script is set out at  
<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1700.pdf>.

<sup>397</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Thai is available at  
<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Thai>

<sup>398</sup> The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Thai script is set out at <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0E00.pdf>.

<sup>399</sup> A collection of U.S. Government material in Ukrainian is available at  
<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Ukrainian>

<sup>400</sup> Vietnamese is the primary language of over 5% of the population of California's 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 46<sup>th</sup>, and 47<sup>th</sup> Congressional Districts, according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (pp. 151, 152, 182, and 183).

A collection of U.S. Government material in Vietnamese is available at  
<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Vietnamese>

## Appendix 6: Model Privacy Policy<sup>401</sup>

### <h1>Privacy Policy</h1>

<p>We respect the privacy of our visitors and all those who come in contact with our office &#8212; be it in-person, through our Web site, or by mail, phone, or email. We therefore try to collect only such personal information as is needed to provide the information, service, or assistance that you request.</p>

### <h2>Information We Collect Automatically</h2>

<p>If you visit our Web sites to browse, read, or download information:<ul>

<li>Your Web browser automatically sends us (and we may retain) information such as the:<ul>

<li>Internet domain through which you access the Internet (<abbr title="for instance">e.g.</abbr>, yourServiceProvider.com if you use a commercial Internet service provider, or yourSchool.edu if you use an Internet account from your school);</li>

<li>Internet Protocol address of the computer you are using;</li>

<li>type of browser software and operating system you are using;</li>

<li>date and time you access our site; and</li>

<li>the Internet address of the site from which you linked directly to our site.</li></ul></li>

<li>We will use this information as aggregate data to help us maintain this site, <abbr title="for instance">e.g.</abbr>, to determine the number of visitors to different sections of our site, to ensure the site is working properly, and to help us make our site more accessible and useful.</li>

<li>We will not use this information to identify individuals, except for site security or law enforcement purposes.</li>

<li>The office that maintains the Web server that our Web site resides on also has access to this information and is governed by its own <a href="[URL of the Web host vendor's privacy policy]" title="privacy policy of [insert name of Web host vendor]">privacy policy</a>. </li></ul></p>

<sup>401</sup> This model privacy policy is intended to be consistent with the privacy notice content regulations issued pursuant to the:

- Children's Online Privacy Protection Act - regulations set out at [16 C.F.R. § 312.4\(b\)\(2\)](#);
- Privacy Act - regulations set out at [OMB Memorandum M-99-18, attachment \(Guidance and Model Language for Federal Web Site Privacy Policies\)](#);
- E-Government Act – regulations are set out at [OMB Memorandum M-03-22, attachment A](#), § III.

## <h2>Other Information We Collect</h2>

<p>If you choose to identify yourself (or otherwise provide us with personal information) when you call us, write to us, send us e-mail, or use our online forms:<ul>

<li>We will collect (and may retain) any personally identifying information, such as your name, street address, email address, and phone number, and any other information you provide to us. We will use this information to try to fulfill your request and may use it provide you with additional information at a later time. We will not disclose such information to third parties, except as specified in this privacy policy.</li>

<li>If you request information, services, or assistance, we may disclose your personal information to those third parties that (in our judgment) are appropriate in order to fulfill your request. If, when you provide us with such information, you specify that you do not want us to disclose the information to third parties, we will honor your request. Note, however, that If you do not provide such information, it may be impossible for us to refer, respond to or fulfill your request.</li>

### Offices that store E-Newsletter distribution lists on servers outside of HOUSE.GOV should add:

<li>If you sign up for [name of the office's e-newsletter], your subscription data (including your name and e-mail address) will be stored on a server outside of our office. The company that maintains that server may also have access to that information and is governed by its own <a href="[URL of the distribution service's privacy policy]" title="privacy policy of [insert name of the distribution service]">privacy policy</a>.</li>

<li>If your communication relates to a law enforcement matter, we may disclose the information to law enforcement agencies that we deem appropriate.</li></ul></p>

## <h2>How Long We Keep Information</h2>

<p>We may keep information that will collect for an unlimited period of time.</p>

## <h2>Security</h2>

<p>Please note that electronic communication, particularly e-mail, is not necessarily secure against interception. Please <strong>do not</strong> send sensitive data

(**<abbr title="for instance">**e.g.**</abbr>**, Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers) by e-mail or Web form.**</p>**

**Offices that want to rigorously comply with OMB Guidance for Implementing the Privacy Provisions of the E-Government Act of 2002 (OMB Memorandum M-03-22) should insert the following:**

## **<h2>Privacy Act</h2>**

**<p>**Although our office is not covered by the Privacy Act, we will attempt to treat your information as if the Privacy Act applied to it.**</p>**

## **<h2>Cookies</h2>**

**<p>**We do not use persistent **&#8220;cookies&#8221;** on this Web site. **[if session cookies are used, (1) indicate that here; (2) indicate what information is collected; (3) indicate what the information is used for; (4) provide an explanation what session cookies are, e.g., “Session cookies are temporary files that are erased when you close all browsers.”; and (5) indicate if accepting cookies is voluntary or mandatory for using the site (or for using a specific portion of the Web site), e.g., “Accepting session cookies on our site is voluntary; you may still use the site if you decline cookies.”]****</p>**

## **<h2>Contacting Us</h2>**

**<p>**If you would like to contact us concerning our privacy policy or our use of information collected through this Web site, please contact us at:**</p>**

**<p class="contactInfo">**[Name of office]**<br />**  
[Street Address]**<br />**  
[City, State, and Zip Code]**</p>**

**<p class="contactInfo">**By telephone: **[telephone number]****</p>**

**<p class="contactInfo">**By e-mail: **[public e-mail address or URL for contact form]****</p>**